





"We saw a number of Indians on the jump after us."

*Page 158.*

# *On Western Trails in the Early Seventies*

FRONTIER PIONEER LIFE IN  
THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

BY

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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THE readers of my last published book in the days of the Red River Rebellion will remember I closed, in my recital of events and experiences, with the end of 1872; therefore, I begin this volume with the 1st of January, 1873.



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# ON WESTERN TRAILS IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

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## CHAPTER I.

Condition of Red River Country—Sublime Isolation.

A genuine Canadian winter controlled the situation, especially from the Red Deer River northward and eastward. For this western country the snow was deep, and trails, when made, were easily filled and gone. As yet the population was small and hardly felt in the bigness of this immense area. The plainsmen tribes, among the Crees and Salteaux, were bunched in lots at the last points of timber, stretching out into Canada's big, treeless plain. The buffalo kept out beyond them, and, notwithstanding the stress and storm of the rigorous winter, refused to come into the northern pastures on the Battle and Saskatchewan Rivers. With these Indians times were hard.

They could not go far out on their hunts, lack of fuel and stormy weather forbidding this, and the few buffalo their braver and hardier hunters secured barely kept the camps in life. Under such conditions, all shared alike. It was either a feast or a famine that winter, largely the latter.

Their hereditary foes, the Blackfoot tribes, including the Bloods and Piegiens and Sarcees, were more favored by the movements of the wild herds, which swung up out of the plains westward into the foothills and mountains of what is now Northern Montana and Southern Alberta. Here there is a small ribboning of timber and scrub on the many rivers which parallel each other out of the mountains and run eastward and both northerly and southerly through the plains.

On these streams the inhabitants of these moving villages found fuel and shelter and vantage ground from which to rush out upon the herds and secure food and trade for their camps. The Mountain and Wood Stoneys roamed from the northern tributaries of the Missouri to the Athabasca, and generally kept inside of the foothills. These Indians were more independent than the plains tribes, as they were, almost without exception, expert wood hunters. Moose, elk, caribou, small deer, big-horn, goat, all kinds of bear and lynx, as well as buffalo, made up their larder, and yet, like that of all hunters, this was often empty.

North of the Red Deer the Hudson's Bay Company and some free traders controlled the trade and commerce of the whole land. South of the Red Deer, and within recent years, Americans, or Long Knives, as they were called, had established some trading posts and wolfers' headquarters, and, as rumor had it, at these southern posts, "Made on the Spot Whiskey" was the chief article of trade.



The whole country, both north and south, was without law. Tribal war and might dominated throughout the great North-West.

All the missionary enterprise, so far as located, was at this time confined to the North country. We were at the most southerly point of Pigeon Lake, and from that point some three hundred miles stretched between us and the boundary line; and as this line had not yet been defined, one might say there was a vast area, both in Canada and the United States, without law, and the scene of much turbulent life. Here the Indian warrior was in his glory, and the lawless white man, leaving behind all bonds and fetters, had a free hand in following the bent of his wild passions. Murder and massacre were constant occurrences, even in cold blood; but when the wildest of whiskey was running riot, then terrible orgies, both brutal and shameful, were enacted.

Such was the condition south of the Red Deer River, and away on into Montana. North of the Red Deer, the pacific and humane policy of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company, and the fact that they had banished all intoxicating liquors from their interior posts and general trade, also that from here northward was the scene of missionary work, made a wonderful difference in conditions. While there was no government, nor yet the semblance of either civil or criminal law, still the desire of the Indians and mixed bloods and whites was to live at peace, and, for the most part, kindly relations obtained. That is, that in the northern

part of these territories, while it behooved all men to keep their powder dry, as well as trust in Providence, one breathed somewhat freer and was not as tense as was constantly necessary in the southern portion.

At Pigeon Lake, the most of our people were absent, the Stonies south near the mountains, and the Crees out eastward at the points of timber. Those around us were living on rabbits and lynx and fish. Fortunately, with the buffalo so far away, the rabbits and wildcats or lynx were more numerous than usual. Mrs. McDougall took some time to distinguish between wildcat meat and venison. "Such tender venison! Look, John! See; I saved a roast until you came home!" I looked, and saw, and enjoyed the well-cooked roast, and kept my own counsel. There are times when ignorance is bliss.

Old Paul, our nearest neighbor, a French half-breed, but an ultra-Protestant (a rather strange anomaly), would visit his snares, and, as his medicine was good, would generally find from two to six cats strangled in them. As the biggest of all refrigerators was in splendid working order all through the winter of 1872 and 1873, strangled wildcat meat was at a premium, and a long way ahead of rabbits or poor fish. Indeed, wildcat was rabbit in the next stage, and rabbit was tree and plant, purely vegetarian; therefore, wildcat was vegetable, and of such man was to make his food; all natural, all reasonable, all healthy. Thus we

thought and said within ourselves: "Why tell this tenderfoot lady, 'This is cat's meat,' and perplex and confuse her mind and stomach with all these metaphysical deductions, howsoever logical they might be?"

Sublime indeed was our isolation—sixty miles to Edmonton, and no trail, snow deep and winter stormy; and when at Edmonton you were nine hundred miles from the nearest postoffice, and about twelve hundred miles from the last railway station. Humanity was sparse and few in this large territory, and the wilderness primeval, huge in all directions. Cree and Stoney were the dominant languages used, and surely this was a most wonderful change for my Ontario girl. She and my two little daughters were often alone. My wandering, nomadic congregations were seldom at the mission, and we went to them more often than they came to us. We could move so much easier than a large camp of Indians. They had to follow the game, which was forever migrating. In such work, and with one hard trip to Edmonton and Victoria to attend district and missionary meetings, the winter of 1872 and 1873 quickly passed.

There was one very agreeable break in the loneliness of the winter, caused by a visit paid to us by father and mother and our Brother and Sister Hardisty. They travelled out by dog train, and their short sojourn was a delight to our little company. At that time Edmonton was the metropolis of the whole western country. It was only

twelve hundred miles from a railroad, and some thousand miles from a telegraph office, and there was no regular mail communication. Isolation profound was its condition, and yet, to us, in the greater wilderness, a visit from these leading citizens of this lone station was as a bright break of sunlight through the steady cloud of our loneliness.

At this time the Chairman and myself arranged to make a reconnaissance of the southwestern country as early in the spring as possible. For this purpose, we made an appointment to meet at about equal distance between Pigeon Lake and Edmonton. I was to select and furnish the guide, and my sister Nellie was to come out with father and make life less lonely at Pigeon Lake while we were away. To bring her in, I took with me my faithful Donald. I had been fortunate in securing a Mountain Stoney, a brother of Mark Ear, of whom I made mention in my former books. George Ear, like his noble brother, was a true man, and knew the country between the Saskatchewan and the 49th parallel like as a few men know their Bible. He could give you pass and ford, even as the others could chapter and verse. Wonderful brains these men have developed during the centuries for the taking and retaining of true pictures of the topography and geography of a country. They were also magnificently gifted with memory out of the long past, and, without pencil or diary, they never forgot.

Behold us, then, on the morning of one of the first days in April, 1873, bidding our adiens to the

little company of loved ones and small gathering of our people, and, with pack and saddle horse, we were soon lost in the dense forest which fringes Pigeon Lake. Remember that the partings at this time were solemn. Before us were wild mountain rivers, unbridged and ferryless; wild beasts, grizzlies and mountain lions, mad wolves and madder buffalo. But, worst of all, tribal war was rampant, so that when you bade your friends good-bye, you looked into eyes more often dim than bright.

Thus, that day, we left our people. The snow had been deep; the swamps and little streams were now full, and our progress was slow. Splash, splash, plunge, plunge into water and ice and mud, and out into dense thickets, where, of recent years, only ourselves had taken time to cut out the trail. In the evening, punctual to the time appointed, we met father and Sister Nellie, and in exchange of news, and glad intercourse, we made camp and spent the night.

In the chill of the early spring morning, Nellie and her escort, Donald, started for the lonely station at Pigeon Lake, and we commenced our journey in what was, to both father and myself, after the first hundred and fifty miles, "the great unknown." We journeyed southward, along the pack trail leading to the Rocky Mountain House, as far as Weed Creek, and then across country to the Wolf Trail. In due time we had crossed the Battle and Blind Man's Rivers, and then we took the Big

Red Deer. Ten years earlier father and myself had been on this same spot, and still, as far as humanity is concerned, there was no change. This great, good land was without inhabitants. The primitive condition was still in full sway, and in loneliness we rode on, speculating on the inevitable change that was coming. *We knew it was coming.* And now the mighty Rockies burst upon our view, and steadily towards them we persistently jogged. Jogged, I say, for on all these long journeys this was our step, from morning until night; neither a walk nor a canter, but a continuous, persistent jog forever; thus we made long distances. The hardy pioneer never thought of himself, but of his horse, and very soon he learned that the jog was the natural and most continuous step in long journeys.

After we crossed the Red Deer, we began to fall in with little bands of buffalo bulls, and often came upon single ancients, who stared at us and then lumbered away over the hills, ever and anon stopping to stand and stare us out of countenance, if this were possible. Being rightful descendants of a distinct portion of the race, this was impossible, and on we went.

Having a good supply of food, we lost no time hunting by the way. Duck and chicken were in myriad numbers, and the tracks of deer were numerous, but we stayed not to hunt at the time. We were looking up the country and its people, if haply we might find these latter.

## CHAPTER II.

Up the Bow Valley—Visit Bear Paw's Lodge—Move into South Country—Cross the Big Red.

Towards the end of the week we were in the glorious foothills. For the first time in our lives we came into contact with the mountain pine, or Douglas fir tree. The Indians had named this region the Munuhchaban, meaning in English, "The place one takes bows from." The outside wood of the young fir is the most elastic and toughest timber in this western country.

As we rode over these foothill summits, and across these ample and shapely valleys, our ancestral blood was stirred and our pulse-beats quickened, and often did we say, one to the other, "This is immense." The great West was opening to our appreciative eyes and minds wonderful possibilities.

Following up the beautiful Bow Valley until we were within some fifteen miles of the mountains, we camped on the bank of a small creek, and as yet we had not seen a single human being other than those of our own party. As we were making camp, however, father, who had climbed the hill, came back with the word that someone was riding fast and furiously towards us. This proved to be one of our Mountain Stoneys. He said their camp was across

the Bow, and over at the foot of the big range of hills which hemmed in this valley on the south side. He told us his people would be delighted to welcome us to their camp. Although it was now late, and we had journeyed far, we packed and saddled up and started with our newly found friend, who took us to the ford on the Big Bow, and across the valley, and then excused himself and rode on among the hills as fast as his horse could jump. In good time, in the dusk of the evening, we came in sight of the camp, a veritable moving village, the home of the most nomadic of all peoples in America. To my eye, there could be very little more fitting of its kind than an Indian camp, nestling among the valleys, with a background of beautiful foothills, and these, in turn, buttressed by lofty ranges of majestic and imperial mountains. Here the child of nature was at home in nature's lap.

The offspring of this wild, unfettered life of many centuries, held up thus on his mother's breasts, turned one's thoughts to the future and to these magnificent foothill and mountain breasts, surcharged and bursting full with the rich and richer milk of incomputable wealth for the generations yet unborn. The present owners of this great domain were thoughtlessly, carelessly, living on the surface. Like the butterfly flitting from plant to plant, so these men roamed and camped and dreamed not of mines and means which were above and beneath them on every hand. They never thought of nor speculated upon the magnificent



array of mighty power within their sight and sound, and in the centre of which they were living all the time. They worried not because of stacks or stooks, nor yet "stocks." They lost neither appetite nor sleep because of marts or merchants. They heard not the clank and clink of multiple machinery, and much less the roar and rush of transcontinentals. None of these things moved them, for truly it had not entered into their life, nor come as yet into their thought. Sufficient for them was the fact that the sun shone, the waters ran, the dew and rain fell, and mother earth responded gloriously with forest and grass and shrub and fruit. Here the buffalo grazed and grew fat; among these woods the moose and elk browsed and took on in season most exquisite meat; all species of deer and all fur-bearing animals lived and thrived; the creeks and rivers and lakes moved with fish; the seasons followed the one the other in regular succession; life, full and natural, was all around them and above and beneath. So they were amply satisfied. As one of their philosophers put it one day within my hearing, "The Great Father Spirit not only let down from Heaven the splendid vessels of His creation, but He also, with wisdom and blessing, filled them as well." Thus He provided for His beloved children, the red men of mountain and forest and plain.

The man who had found us and galloped on had roused the camp. "The Chief Praying Man is coming. John is with him. Father and son are

here." The two chiefs, Bear's Paw and Cheneka, sent forth the word, "Come out, all ye people, and let us welcome these praying men," and presently we were saluted by every flintlock in the camp, and on every hand came shouts of gratitude because of our arrival, "Ambuhwastage!" and a solid grip of the hand from both men and women, and thus we were escorted to Bear's Paw's lodge, where we were to make our home. As the day was now about gone, we held a short service in the open, and soon all was quiet. The great mountain sentinels were above and the big foothills around us, and the wiry, agile and brave warriors, in their turn, were silently at their posts, guarding us as we tried to sleep. For me this was not now possible. Somewhere in this vicinity I was to establish a mission.

Long years in the past the Hudson's Bay Company had withdrawn from this part. They had found the land and its people altogether too dangerous; and now, because of traders and wolfers and wild adventurers who were coming in from the south, across the line, and introducing western ruffianism and extreme barbarism, conditions were worse than ever. We had war, and whiskey, and wildness to face on every hand. So much depended on these mountain people in whose midst we now were. If we could grip their sympathies, and have their friendship, then they would be as our body-guard in this new enterprise.

Already we had learned that these people were distinct in type—quick, impetuous, nervous, full of

surprises. Like the torrents and avalanches in the mountains, so these men were moved and stirred, and the problem was before us. Some men had said, "You will be killed, or else back into the North, before the year is out"; others shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads, and looked at us as if for the last time. However, our Chairman was determined, and the sanction of the Board had been given, and I was commissioned to make the attempt; and here we were, prospecting the country and its people.

What would the morning bring forth?

These questions were to me weighty and puzzling as I lay there that night in the early spring of 1873. It is all very well to have someone say to you, "Cast your burden on Providence," but we had been trained to feel the weight of our own burden, and just now this seemed to be heavy. However, I did ask for strength, and tact, and wisdom, and was much comforted in so doing.

The next day, after a wonderful morning service, wherein father seemed to catch the inspiration of this majestic environment, and told the old, old story with a marvellous eloquence, we saddled up, and, on fresh horses, provided by the Indians, rode up the valley, our escort being the chiefs and head men of the tribe. We followed the buffalo trails, and went through Douglas pine forests, across valleys and over hills, where, at every turn, the scenes were striking and altogether beautiful. Then we had, as the ever-present great background, the mountains.

During the morning, at the request of Bear's Paw, I tried his horse after the buffalo, and killed one. Then we went on to the Kananaskis, and lunched beside its rushing current on pemmican and dried meat. Then we rode nearer the mountains, and forded the Bow, and came down on the north side to the site of the Bow Fort, long since abandoned by the Hudson's Bay Company, and now in evidence only because of the chimney piles of ancient debris. This section of the country was too much in the path of the war parties, and too many distinct tribes were constituent to this part of the great West; so the Honorable Company retired altogether from the field. All day our guides had pointed out the scenes of murder and massacre, and told us of most pitiful conditions which had been the common experience not long since, when the fearful smallpox epidemic devastated this whole country in 1870-1—how camp called to camp across the swollen currents of the Bow, and every call told of the increasing dead. "And who brought in this loathsome disease and spread it amongst the tribes? Why, the white man, of course. He wants this country. Disease will kill faster than bullets." We were brought up against these difficult problems and prejudices, and our work would be to establish government, and bring about peace, and eradicate prejudice, and show these different peoples that there is righteousness among men, and that the Gospel is the real and only present and eternal salvation. Thus we thought and planned, as we

rode on down the valley and again forded the Bow. In the evening of this eventful day we again reached camp, and were privileged to hold another most interesting service with these wild mountain people. Warriors and hunters they were because of their environment, surely the bravest and most expert hunters of all the aboriginal peoples in this wide Dominion.

On the morrow we moved with the camp into the South country. Our course ran along between ranges of lofty foothills, and the mountains every few rods gave a new scene. To father and myself all this was most exhilarating. Never before had we come so close to the mountains. Notwithstanding our most nomadic lives, never before had we camped amongst the wonderful foothills. Exquisite scenes of prairie and forest and hill and mountain were all about us. We rode and looked. We looked and rode, and felt the inspiration of such marvellous grandeur. Then the climate was full of bracing effect. The atmosphere was surcharged with ozone. Thus we travelled with this moving town of God's wandering children, who, throughout the ages, had seldom spent more than three nights in one spot.

Our programme while with the camp was, first, early morning service; then down came the lodges, and soon we were on the trail, and, with a short rest at noon, we travelled until evening, and held another service.

In the meanwhile the hunters were out on either hand, and buffalo and deer and elk and bear were

being brought into camp as we moved, or when we stopped for the night.

Holding services, giving lectures, travelling and hunting, interviewing and being interviewed, studying these new humanities, thus we moved south into the upper High River country, and Sunday came, and we spent the whole day in one continuous gathering.

The day was gloriously fine. The scene was one great cathedral, and the valley echoed with songs of praise to the Great Creator. Some were baptized, some were married, all were eager for instruction, and the people were greatly strengthened in their stand for righteousness and temperance and peace.

Monday morning we held another big gathering, and, with the benediction, said good-bye, the Chairman assuring these mountain nomads that John, God willing, would be back with them before winter and remain with them as their missionary.

Thus we parted, they to move on south and meet their allies, the Kootenays, and in due time come roaming north again. Setting our faces by a new route northward, recrossing the many rivers and streams, we forded the Bow near where the town of Cochrane is now situated. From thence we skirted the Dog Pond along the eastern bank, and, crossing the Little Red Deer, came out on the Big Red Deer above the mouth of the Medicine Lodge.

At the crossing of the Big Red we got a good soaking, as the river had risen, and we were glad to gain the woods, and, making a big fire, enjoy a general dry-up. Then we went up the west bank

of the Medicine looking for a ford, but found none, and decided to build a raft. Swimming our horses, we crossed on the raft and struck north and over the divide to the Blind Man's. Here we found a ford, then kept on up the valley to the big range of hills from whence the stream heads.

As we rode these many miles, we saw in prophetic vision the settling up of this wonderful country—schoolhouse and church, village and homestead, presently the iron horse, and then the mine and factory. We, father and son, saw this coming. As sure as God had made such a world, so we felt certain it would be peopled. I well remember father saying to me, as we rode up the beautiful valley of the Blind Man, "You and I alone to-day, but we are the forerunners of the millions who are coming." On over a big ridge we rode, and then down the long slope to Battle Lake, which is the head of the Battle River. Father and myself had been here in 1863.

Ten years had come and gone, and still no change. Here was the wilderness primeval. That day we came upon a camp of semi-Wood and semi-Mountain Stoneys, who greeted us warmly, and whose welcome was most hearty. It was Saturday night. We had evening service, and remained with them until the afternoon of Sunday. Then we continued our journey over another big divide, and came out at the north-west end of Pigeon Lake, and, coasting around this, reached our mission station, where a glad welcome awaited us. In this vast isolation and loneliness, our arrival caused great joy.

## CHAPTER III.

Push on to Edmonton—Down the Saskatchewan—Call at Fort Ellis.

The next morning father pushed on to Edmonton, and we made preparations to follow, as it was my plan to leave my family at Edmonton while I was away on my long journeys. Moreover, Edmonton would be the better place to make our start from in the autumn for the Bow River country. We had explored the south land. We had covered hundreds of miles of new territory, and both the Chairman and myself had determined that with the knowledge we now had the Bow River Valley was the proper place, and, for our work, the strategic centre. In these few weeks of travel, we had beheld a new Empire, and a most glorious portion of this great West.

And now behold us, like the pilgrims of old, moving, bag and baggage, from Pigeon Lake, en route to Edmonton, wife and sister and my children on horseback, camp equipage and luggage in carts (in those days we were unencumbered with furniture), wending our way through the woods and across the swamps and muskegs and streams towards the lone metropolis of the greater West.

We had with us a sworn friend of mine, Jacob Big Stoney, who was to accompany me across the plains to the banks of the Red, where the now city of



Winnipeg was in germ, in the little village just north of old Fort Garry. To Jacob and his people this was a great undertaking, to go down the Saskatchewan Valley, to cross over to the Assiniboine, and follow this to its junction with the Red; to travel through the land of the Wood and Plain Cree, and Salteaux; to come into contact with the Dakota Sioux, who had fled into this territory after the Minnesota massacre of 1862; to view the beginning of the human tide, which was now on the banks of the Red, but which would ultimately cover the whole land. This was a much-discussed matter, and, with solemn mien, Jacob's people committed Jacob to my care. But between this man Jacob and myself there had grown up a wonderful confidence. A child of the woods, a son of the mountains, coming out of a natural school, richly endowed with native graces, truly my friend Jacob was a man to be loved and greatly admired, perfect in stature, and handsome in countenance and form, an athlete in constant training, a mighty hunter, and now, by the grace of God, a humble Christian. This was the friend who was to be my companion for the coming months. He would teach me, verily, as I would try to teach him. Around many camp-fires we would study each other, and the very distinct environments we had come from.

Three days brought us to Edmonton, and, crossing the river, we were at the post. To make a crossing of a big river in 1873 in the North-West meant something. There were no Government

bridges, and there were no licensed wire-rope ferries. By dint of much wading and splashing and shouting, and often many disappointments, you urged your stock to take the current. Repeatedly the cattle would turn and come back to the same shore. Again and again the effort must be made. You would start them in a little higher up or lower down; you would think you had now caught the right sweep of current, and once more they would be off. Then you would breathe freely and rest your lungs for a moment; but, alas, back they would turn, and all must again be gone over. Meanwhile, the day was passing quickly; and when, by dint of much hard work and exposure, your stock would be across, then you would take your carts and wagons to pieces and load them on the skiff or boat or scow. Finally, pulling or tracking this boat away upstream, and then pulling oar or sweep with all your might, you would reach the further shore. This would have to be repeated over and over again until all were across.

The pioneer of to-day is a misnomer. There is no pioneering to-day. Then life was strenuous. Now it is luxurious. Having reached Edmonton, we began to make ready for the long trip to Fort Garry. Good-bye for months to wife and children and parents and friends, and Jacob and I were off, I in a buckboard, on the tail of which all our camp equipment was lashed, and my companion on horseback.

Away we rode at a steady jog. We left Ed-

monton Friday evening, and made Victoria Saturday night. We spent Sunday in my brother's home, and took part in the services of the day. English and French, mixed bloods and Indians, all were hungry for the Gospel in the mother tongue. God had given us this rare privilege, and this was our opportunity.

Monday, bright and early, we were away, following down the north side of the great Saskatchewan, sometimes in full view of its majestic bend, more frequently miles in the interior. Everywhere we were travelling through a prepared land.

We passed the White Mud, Vermilion, Saddle Lake, Egg Lake, the Dog Romp, Moose Creek, and Frog Lake. We rolled up through and between the Two Hills; ever and anon we looked over a world of beauty and infinite possibility. We were carrying the packet from the Great West. We called at Fort Pitt and picked up more mail; we rushed on under the Frenchmen's Butte; we crossed the Red Deer and Turtle Rivers; we skirted the White Earth and Jackfish Lakes.

We rolled past in sight of the great springs where, it is said, whole bands of buffalo have disappeared and again emerged in mysterious ways. Such is tradition. We passed the Bear's Paddling Lake. We climbed the Thick Wood Hills, and surmounting these looked down on the Red Berry and Fort Carlton country. We came out on the Saskatchewan opposite the old Fort, swam our horses and ferried our buckboard and belongings, called

at the Fort for more mail,--and an interchange of news, and passed on by Duck Lake and camped Saturday evening on the north bank of the South Saskatchewan. To the men who moved and travelled as we did in those early days, the coming of the Sabbath was most welcome. We could sublimely appreciate the rest. When you start with daylight, and travel until the dusk of the evening, never losing a minute around camp or on the road, always studying your horses, and keeping them at the regular gait up hill and down dale, cooking your meals, oiling your rig, perhaps mending your harness and fastening the bolts of your vehicle, and press on without stop for six days, then, if you are at all reasonable, and have any of the principle of gratitude in your makeup, you naturally praise God for the Sabbath.

We rested, man and beast, and took on strength for the days that were coming; then early Monday morning we found one of our horses drowned in a swamp, in which he had thrown himself with the hobble, but we did not stop to mourn. He was but one of the many lost, stolen and used up in the constant rush of continuous travel.

On across the big river we went, and then stuck to the trail for the Red River and Old Fort Garry. We called at Fort Ellis and took some more mail for the East. We caught up to some travellers, who said they would accompany us into the settlement, but the next morning we left them asleep.

We camped Saturday night with some others,

but they left us Sunday morning. We kept the Sabbath, and we passed the party on Tuesday morning, our horses fresh and theirs jaded and losing flesh fast. We made the record trip without any relay of horses from Edmonton to Fort Garry, doing the distance in less than fourteen days. On the way down, I translated the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee" and have since heard the aborigines of an immense area singing the same in many a mission church and around many a camp fire.

Nearing Fort Garry and Winnipeg, my companion began to open his eyes. Here were more people than he had ever seen, more buildings than he had ever dreamed of. Little Grace Church was to him an immense sanctuary. Into his life, all this came as a wonderful revelation. Even for this I had brought him from his mountain and forest home.

The General Secretary, the Rev. Laughlin Taylor, D.D., was not on hand. He had gone down Lake Winnipeg to Norway House and beyond. He might return at any time, or it might be weeks of waiting; accordingly we settled down to take care of our horses, and to do any work that might come to hand and be ready.

Winnipeg in 1873 was beginning. A few of the hardier and more speculative of our Canadian people were coming in. Everything was crude, the West and the East slowly coming together. The ironless cart and flashy buggy were standing or rolling side by side. The tenderfoot and the native

to the manner born fraternised on the muddy street of this germ of a coming city.

Among these old-timers and the day's new-comers, Jacob and I mingled and studied during the days of our waiting. Then the "Big" man came, and we hurriedly made ready to recross the great plain. Our manner of travel was in this wise: I drove ahead with a regular prairie wagon, half springs and long box. Dr. Taylor came next in a buckboard, then our loose horses, then Jacob, driving a buckboard. To the doctor the plains were a new experience; to Jacob, the four-wheeled rig was also something entirely new. The doctor would let his horse follow after me, and his wheels drop into the deep cart ruts, constantly running the risk of being thrown out, and Jacob would seek to avoid this rut and drop into that one, notwithstanding my warnings. It was most amusing to see both the East and West jolting along as if all things were in a state of disjointment. Nevertheless, we made good time, averaging about fifty miles a day, which, for our heavier equipment, was doing well, but very hard work for our traveller. A little French priest, recently out from Paris, whom father met on the plain, remarked: "Oh, yes, Mista McDugal, vera fine countree, but plenty mesare." And even so our venerable General Secretary found things. An extra splash of rich mud, a few millions of ravenously hungry mosquitoes, an onslaught of bulldogs, the long weary miles of persistent and strenuously constant travel from dawn to dark—truly this was hard on flesh and blood.

At times the doctor was silent for hours. A bounding antelope, a glorious landscape, a lovely lake, gemmed and dotted with all manner of wild fowl, all this was vain. What had he done to have this premature purgatory thus thrust upon him? Then there came times when the mood would change. "Say, Brother John, is this not most beautiful? Ah, what a wonderful country." "Look, Brother John, did you ever see anything grander than that, stretching away yonder for miles." Very seldom do we find men of an equipoise, men whose judgments abnormal conditions will not move. Surely these will multiply, else the race will degenerate.

Behind me were two distinct types of manhood, and often I amused and educated myself as I drove along at the head of our little caravan, in studying these unique characters, with whom I was thus brought into contact. How often it was borne in upon me that our civilization as it is called does not produce the gentleman, and even the higher influence of Christianity must struggle with our race for centuries to make real men and women.

On we rode, and as we again carried the packet for the Great West, were welcome visitors for the moment at the Hudson's Bay post.

At Fort Ellis Dr. Taylor and Chief Factor McDonald got out of our ken and away into the Gaelic. From thence I took a new route and kept the south side of the Qu'Appelle until we had gone west of the Broken Arm, on to the south branch, on to

Fort Carleton, and once more across the North Saskatchewan, and presently we were north of Fort Pitt, and I camped my party near Onion Lake, then started in with the packet for the Fort.

On my way I looked for the Hudson's Bay horse guard, as I wanted a fresh mount into the Fort and back. Presently I saw the band of horses and the lodge of the guard.

On riding up, I found that the guard was away and his wife and daughter did not know me. However, I was persistent in asking for the best saddle horse in the bunch, and soon I saw that these women were beginning to believe I was not fraudulent. Then the mother asked me if I was the man who had taken a white woman through this country last winter, and I pleaded guilty at once to the charge of having done so. Then all suspicion was allayed, and she told her daughter to catch up the "White Face," and soon I was astride the fine, fresh horse, and on a straight gallop for the Fort. Imagine my surprise when riding into the gate to find my father and the Rev. Peter Campbell, who had come on this far to meet the General Secretary, and to help me escort him up the valley of the Saskatchewan. Soon my packet was delivered, and my friends had harnessed up and were ready, and we went north to my companions, where there was a joyous meeting of old friends. As the day was not all spent, we made a long drive that evening, and when around the camp fire, because of increased numbers, there was much more life than usual.



Early and late we rolled on, into what Dr. Taylor now called this "most wonderful and unlimited country," weeks of travel and still more beyond. When we reached Saddle Lake, Dr. Taylor and father and myself left the rest of the party to move on to the White Mud River on the main trail. We went north to White Fish Lake. We were now on horseback, and this was a long ride for the doctor. Reaching the mission, we found it about deserted.

The missionary and his people were out on the plains following the great herds. However, we found Benjamin Sinclair, the lay brother, who was assistant to the first Protestant missionary to the Great West, the Rev. Robert Rundle. Ben had come up into the Saskatchewan in the early days; had been at Pigeon Lake and Lac Labiche, and now was settled beside this mission. He was an all-round sort of a man. He could build a boat or a house or make a dog-sled or a pair of snowshoes. He was an agriculturist. It was right here, at this northern lake, that Ben sowed one keg of barley and reaped and cleaned up eighty kegs from the one. He had grown wheat also, and several kinds of vegetables, thus in the forties and fifties, demonstrating that in this north-western portion of great Canada all this was possible. Then he was a first-class hunter of moose, elk, all sorts of deer, buffalo and bear. He was most renowned in all this. Moreover, he was a great trapper of beaver, marten, otter, fisher, lynx, mink, muskrat; in all these, Ben was hard to beat. He was also a remarkable

preacher, and a splendid syllabic scholar. Few men knew their Bible like this man, who had never gone to school, pardon the paradox, but had been in school all his life. Our doctor was greatly interested in this man.

We spent the day visiting the mission and the few people at home, but spent most of the time with Ben Sinclair. One such man rescued and saved and lifted was a big success for the efforts of a missionary society in one generation. But right here, we were in association with another great success. The absent missionary, the Rev. Henry Steinhauer, whose work was all around us, and which we were now inspecting, is a most glorious sample of the regenerating power of the gospel. Right out of the brush camp and birch bark lodge, right out of confirmed old-time faiths, as old as the generations of men, and at one leap and by one big bound he is across the wide chasm of the centuries, and stands out before all the world, a new man—a scholar, a practical civilizer, a Christian gentleman, a man consecrated to God and humanity. Henry Steinhauer and Benjamin Sinclair are miracles of redeeming grace. We could not stay but a night and part of a day. This is a big country, and as yet we were without wings. "Good-bye, Ben," and we swung into the saddle and took the dim trail through the woods, across country to the rendezvous with our party.

## CHAPTER IV.

At White Fish Lake—Spurious Civilization—Back to Edmonton—Buffalo Hunt.

It was afternoon and a glorious day when we skirted White Fish Lake, and from the hills looked upon this beautiful inland water stretch, and away across to the hills westward and northward, which rose majestic and timber-clad, gorgeous in their summer beauty.

We went to the north of Good Fish Lake, another reservoir of fine fresh water, even as the Lord did arrange things in wisdom and in love. We left its northern shore, and climbing the hill, took the old buffalo trail through the woods, alternating with beaver dam spots and open spaces covered with rich grass.

We jogged along to suit the pace to our venerable friend's infirmity, for it was plain he was very weary, and, unlike other men, he was letting himself go with his will, for, after all, this is the large sum of the difference between men, one gives away, the other, by dint of sheer will power, gathers himself to resist and conquer. Hundreds of times we have been there. Hundreds of times we have watched other men as they struggled, and presently the spirit would dominate; but here to-day the steady jog was too much and we had to slow down. We should have made our party before dark, but

the night found us many miles short, and in the big wilderness. There was nothing for it but to camp, and we had no camp equipment with us. For father and myself, this was as nothing. To go without supper and breakfast, to pass the night without blankets was but a change, but our doctor felt the hardship keenly. He was a spoiled child and grumbled and blamed and scolded. We made a pleasant campfire; we fixed him up a bed with saddle blankets and our coats; we did what we could, but he refused to be comforted.

Here was a sample of spurious civilization. We have met a lot of this in our time; too much coddling, too much comfort, too much false sympathy, and the result a misconception of life and its responsibility, and the further result is moral and physical degeneracy. No wonder the Lord has every little while to bring trouble upon a nation or people. They must war and fight and campaign and struggle and meet disease and calamity in order to be saved from inertia and destruction. I thought this that night as I gathered wood and kept the camp fire burning beside our sorely set upon and awfully persecuted fellow traveller.

With the dawn we were away, and at the slow pace of our friend it was nearly noon when we came up to our party and breakfast. Then with sunshine and food, the doctor came to his normal. Give me the men who, in the blackness of storm and long distance from the base of supplies, are normal and cheerful and gladly willing to do and be the best

that is in them. However, we must be patient; humanity, even as Israel of old, is still in the wilderness, and yet we do verily believe that the Joshuas and Calebs are multiplying in human experience. We made Victoria in the afternoon, and as this was Saturday prepared to spend the Sabbath on this mission.

The doctor made his home with the missionary and his family in the mission house, and father and myself were welcomed in my brother's home, where his wife and my sister Nellie were delighted to have us.

To both father and myself, this was historic ground. In these days we do not wait for the centuries to make history; we are making it rapidly all the time. In 1862 I began work at this point; in 1863 Mr. Woolsey moved to this spot, and in the autumn of the same year, father came up from Norway House and took charge. We had witnessed some change; we had gone through many dangers and hardships and sorrows on and around this centre.

From here we had travelled out on many long trips to distant camps, thousands of miles by snowshoe and dog train, and thousands of miles by horse, mostly in the saddle. To us the contour of the hills, the curves of the stream and all things around were familiar, and, in association, sacred.

The doctor was pleased with the beauty of the spot and thankful to have accomplished as much of the long journey in safety.

On Sunday the doctor gave us one of his wonderful sermons in the morning, and to me came the privilege of preaching in the afternoon to the people in the tongue wherein they were born.

On Monday we moved on for Edmonton, and when within fifteen or eighteen miles of there, were pleasantly surprised to meet quite a company of friends who had come out to welcome us. They had a sumptuous meal ready when we drove up. My wife and sisters were with the party, and to these good people, shut out for months from the outside world, it was no small matter that we brought the mail, and it was a very great matter that we brought the General Secretary of the Missionary Society and a man of wide renown. Certainly Protestantism had never been thus officially represented in all the previous history of this country. Then there was the reunion with our loved ones. All this made the occasion full of profound interest.

Here were the Hudson's Bay officers, the Chief Factor and his lady, and some of the principal clerks and post masters, and others who had come out to welcome and escort back to Edmonton our party and the distinguished official we had with us. It was Tuesday evening when we reached the mission and Fort Edmonton. Here mother gave us our real home welcome. Since my departure in the early summer, the church had been finished and many other improvements had been accomplished around the mission. Father was forever busy, and the few residents of the Fort and new settlement were with him heartily in all his work.

We rested Wednesday, and then crossed the river, and travelled as fast as we could to Pigeon Lake. This time we took a buckboard two-thirds of the way in for the doctor's use, and I saw that the horse pulling it kept moving. This wonderfully helped matters, and early next day we reached the lake.

Here we spent but part of the day, as we were due back to Edmonton Saturday evening. The doctor looked upon the spot where Rundle had camped and Sinclair had worked, and where after a long interval I had been sent in and had passed through many strange experiences.

Here we left my companion for the better part of the summer, faithful Jacob, who now was the most widely travelled of all his people. He had beheld the red and the beginning of the white man's occupancy, and had many things to tell to his wondering people. Back in the evening through the dense woods, where we had chopped and bridged and brushed this beginning of a highway, even to the spot where we had cached the buckboard. Then we camped, had supper and went to bed.

The next day, on into Edmonton, where we again ferried the big river, and then, though it was Saturday evening, we began to prepare for the real and dangerous part of our long trip out on to the big plains, and up to the mountains, and on south through the new country and across the line into Montana; even to Fort Benton, which we have heard of as the head of navigation on the Missouri.

We did what we could Saturday evening towards this, and then rested, for we were to have two days, Sunday and Monday, at Edmonton.

As the reader will have noticed, the major part of life to the missionary in those days was spent on the trail. The country was big and the distances great, and travel as fast as you could, with either horse or dog, the limitations were large.

Sunday was a glorious day. The doctor was in the happiest of moods, and preached two wonderful sermons. The new church was dedicated. For the time it was a gorgeous and most comfortable building. It was my lot to preach in the afternoon to those who did not fully understand the English. This service was largely attended. Dr. Taylor was much interested in these Cree services, listening and watching everything in song and sermon as if he fully understood.

Monday was a busy day in preparation for our long trip. In the evening, the doctor lectured on Palestine. I had heard this lecture, "The Holy Land," in old Canada during the fifties, but it came fresh and vigorous from the veteran that night in Edmonton. In rich imagery, with rare descriptive power and with lofty eloquence, the doctor handled his subject, and there are men and women still living in this west country who speak with pleasant satisfaction because they were privileged to hear Dr. Taylor preach and lecture in 1873 at Edmonton.

It was afternoon on Tuesday before we were



across the river and fairly on the southern trail. Everybody knew there was plenty of risk in such a trip, and those who went, as well as those who remained, could not help but feel anxious. Our party consisted of Dr. Taylor, my father, a Mr. I. Snider (a probationer) and Willie Whitford, father's man, a young English mixed blood and myself. By general consent and choice, I was made captain of the little party. We had one wagon, in which father and myself took turns in driving, with Dr. Taylor as our passenger. The rest of the party were on horseback. Our course was south-east, across Battle River, and east of Buffalo Lake. We were looking for the big camps, and also hoped to come across Mr. Steinhauer and his people.

Immediately on leaving Edmonton, we were constantly on guard. Horse thieves and scalp-takers might be expected anywhere or at any time in this country. Ceaseless vigilance was the order of our movement day and night as we travelled and camped. This was hard work, but we could not afford to take any chances. I think it was the evening of our fourth day out when we sighted our first buffalo. The doctor had made me promise to kill for him one of the first we might see. He and I were in the wagon at the time, so I gave him the reins and ran on ahead to stalk the bunch if possible. These were bulls, but as I ran up under cover and came near, I saw a young sharp-horned fellow, large and massive, and finely robed, and as

they began to move I plumped him at long range, and as the herd galloped away I gave the same fellow another shot. I knew I had hit both times, for I heard the impact of the bullet and saw the start and cringe of the huge animal. As the buffalo disappeared around the bluff of timber I put in another cartridge and ran after in confidence of a kill, and here as I rounded the point of timber out on the plain lay my game.

I now ran out in sight of my party and made a signal, and then went over to the bull and straightened him up for skinning. Just then, with a shout and a yell, up came the doctor on horseback and claimed the buffalo as his. Presently he was standing on the back of the big brute, and shouting and waving his Glengarry cap and hurraing for our valiant hunter.

Soon our party came up, and we proceeded to butcher the animal, for the meat was fine. The doctor took one of the horns, and also the battered bullet which had killed the animal, and which we found as we cut him up, as souvenirs of the hunt. Going on and camping and having some of the meat for supper, the doctor pronounced it the finest in the world. We told him to wait until we got among the cows, but he was enthusiastic over our first kill of the trip; indeed, everybody enjoyed the fresh meat, and marrow-bones and tit-bits were much in evidence around our campfire that night.

The next day we came across a camp of Crees, and as it was Saturday remained with them until

Monday morning. They told us of a large gathering somewhere in the vicinity of the Hand Hills, but gave us no news concerning Mr. Steinhauer. We did what we could among these people.

All day Sunday we visited and held services. For the most part this camp still clung to the old faith, and Dr. Taylor was disgusted with their heathenism and manner of living. The head man invited our party to a meal in his lodge, but the doctor refused to accept. Father and myself and young Snider went and partook of this hospitality, but I could see the Indian was hurt because the great "praying man" had not come. The real democratic idea had not yet dawned upon the doctor's mind, and yet he had been preaching this Gospel for many years. To me it is passing strange that men will profess to be exponents of an idea and yet, themselves, by their actions, constantly reveal their unbelief in the same.

On Monday morning, as we drove away from this moving village, and in the quiet of our isolation from the rest of our party, I took it upon myself to show the doctor that such conduct on his part would hurt our cause, if he continued so to act, as we might come into contact with these people on this journey. He saw my point, and, like the man he was, when you got beyond his eccentric moods, he said I was right.

## CHAPTER V.

Down the Red Deer—The Dry Rat—Surrounded by Blackfeet—  
Await developments.

We were travelling down the north bank of the Red Deer, straight for the Hand Hills. The next day we came in sight of these big hills, and later saw the big camp of the Northern and Mountain Crees. Here our arrival was a big event. Crowds gathered to listen to the great "praying man," or, as the literal translation of A-yuh-me-a-we-ye-new is, "The man who talks with the Deity," and also, to the chairman of the Saskatchewan district, and by request, John was also called on to speak to these wanderers on the face of God's fair earth.

We found that they had recently several skirmishes with the Blackfeet, and they told us to keep our eyes open and to be forever on the watch and ready. They thought our trip a most dangerous one, but they said: "It may be the Great Spirit will give you favor with the wild tribes and wilder white men you are sure to meet on your trip." We spent the evening and night and all the next day with this camp, but as yet had not heard anything about Mr. Steinhauer, and as the season was advanced we gave him up and decided to strike across the Red Deer and go up country to the mountains in the Bow Valley.

At the close of the first morning service a strange-looking creature, literally in sackcloth and ashes, so far as his environment made this possible, touched my shoulder and, drawing me aside, said: "My brother, I am from away down country. I am utterly bereft; my wife and children all dead. I am wandering to forget my trouble. They tell me you are going into a far country. Will you let me accompany you? I have two horses. Will you let me go with you?" I looked at the fellow and, sizing him up beneath his mourning rags, saw that he might be most useful to us and we might do him some good, and I said: "If you will promise me not to touch firewater while with us on this trip, and also to take your place on guard, night or day, with us, you can come." His face lit up with great joy as he took my hand and put it over his heart and said, "I pledge you to do even as you say." Thus we had one more in our party.

Feeling that our visit to this large camp had done something towards Christianity and the implanting of a confidence in the government of our country, we were grateful. We also felt that the General Secretary could not but understand in some measure the nature of this work in the larger sense, after such an experience.

Now we were face to face with the question, should we make a long detour to effect a crossing of the Red Deer, or make a bold attempt right here, without a trail, to in some way get down into this tremendous canyon, and, striking a ford there,

hunt our way out to the uplands on the other side. Finally I found an Indian who said he thought he could take us down and across.

Behold us then, having said farewell to our Indian friends, winding in and out on a buffalo trail and gradually descending the canyon of the Red Deer. I will venture to say that seldom in the experience of wagon movements did one pass down what seemed the impossible as did ours at that time. However, after some thrilling experiences, we reached the bottom and, finding a ford, and by devious and intricate ways came out on the opposite heights. My friend, the doctor, began to think that I was an expert driver.

Having succeeded in this saving of many miles we now struck westward and set our faces towards the Rockies.

"What is the name of your new *protégé*?" said the doctor to me one day, and I asked my friend his name.

"Bak-o-shu-sk," came the answer.

"His name is 'The Dry Rat,'" was my translation to the Doctor.

"Oh, what a name!" was his exclamation.

Nevertheless, Mr. Dry Rat kept his place in our little company and was always ready and cheerful in the discharge of duty.

On we rode through this most wonderful country. We saw plenty of bulls, but did not stop for them. Saturday afternoon we came to some cows, and I ran them and killed a fine animal, and as

we were striking up country we took the most of the meat into our wagon. When we nooned all the members of our party rejoiced in the rich quality of the meat. However, as we ate and watched our camp and stock we little dreamed that this meal came near being the last for us.

During the afternoon as we drove on our course without trail, suddenly we were surrounded by a wild-looking troop of Blackfeet. The doctor was with me in the wagon, and we were in the lead, and without warning, for the country was undulating, suddenly these Northern Ishmaelites were upon us, and it was plain that they meant mischief. We numbered six; they may have been anywhere from seventy-five to one hundred. However, as the Crees had said, "The Great Spirit might give us favor with these people." A young Blackfoot warrior recognized me and shouted "John," and I nodded to him, and he began explaining to the crowd who I was. He had been with the Sarcees during the summer of 1872, when we had the experiences which I relate in "The Red River Rebellion." The young fellow's name was "Ki-yo-kuh-nas." I well remembered his face, and he did mine also, and now he was pleading and explaining to his companions that we were the red man's friends. It was a case of "Cast your bread upon the waters." Here was the return for a small expenditure of courtesy and attention, and this, my friend, now becomes, under God, our deliverer. The chief of the largest faction in the camp of these men

was here, and I will never forget his Blackfoot name, "O-nes-ta-e-o." He listened to the young man, and finally gave his assent, but said, "We will take these men into our camp"; and now, surrounded by wild cavalry, we were escorted into the Blackfoot town.

Both father and myself very well knew that it became us at this time to be exceedingly passive. The lives of our whole party depended on this.

Thus we rode into the large camp, and were stared at by the crowds as we drove behind the chief, through the lanes of lodges, on up to his own big lodge. Here we were asked to alight and dismount. An order was given for half of his lodge to be cleared out, and we were told to occupy it.

Accordingly, our bedding and baggage were placed in this, and we proceeded to occupy it, greatly to the disgust of Doctor Taylor, who already began to manifest his aversion to any contact with the natives. How in the wide world he ever got through Palestine and the East has always been a mystery to me after that trip with him in 1873. He was an embarrassing proposition, and right here were some of the very best mind-readers in the world. He at first refused to come into the lodge; then, when we finally persuaded him to enter, he positively refused to eat in the lodge with us, and declared he would not sleep there; but as it was still early I thought many things might happen before either supper or bedtime came.

Fortunately for us, there were two or three of



these Indians who had quite a knowledge of the Cree, and, through these, I could communicate with the chief and others. I told them that we did not intend to travel the next day, as it was God's day; and, as we had met them, we now could stay the two nights in their camp, and that our work made us the friends of all men; that the Great Spirit had commissioned us to preach peace to all men, and that we were now on our way to look up a site for a mission station in this southern country, and that we were going on into the "Long Knife" country to see what could be done in the interests of all men and for purposes of peace.

Quite a number of the leading men had gathered into the chief's lodge, and listened to what we had to say with profound interest.

I also said, "As we are here to stay with you all day to-morrow, we will hope to tell you many things about where we came from, and why we are here, and what we purpose doing, if the Great Spirit helps us."

Of course, all this time I was merely presuming. The fact was apparent that we were their captives, and as to what this might mean to our party as yet we were altogether in the dark.

We left horses and harness and wagon entirely in the charge of the chief who led us in. We affected, if we did not altogether feel it, a sublime indifference as to selves and our property, for those of us who understood the situation knew that, so far as man was concerned, we were now altogether

in the hands of these Blackfeet. Many a party like ours had disappeared. However, we were getting on famously, if the Doctor would only fall in line; and now the Blackfeet retired. We asked ourselves, "What comes next?" When behold, the kettles were brought in and supper was served, and the meat was delicious, even if it was cooked by Indians. To our satisfaction the doctor seemed to have forgotten his hastily made vow, and joined us in the meal. So far, so good.

As we ate, we discussed anything but present affairs. We ignored the fact that we were prisoners, and as yet under reserve judgment; also, that in this camp were two hostile factions. We were in the hands of one of these. What would they do in our case? However, we felt our cause was a just one, and this thought was wonderfully bracing. The chief beside us, whose face and actions I had been minutely studying ever since he said, in his quiet way, "We will take these men into our camp," had grown in my estimation. The deference paid him by those who had come in during the evening, and everything else, pointed to a strong, good friend, should he come out on our side.

We must await developments; and thus we sang our evening hymn in the Blackfoot lodge, and knelt in prayer in English and Cree, and committed ourselves into the hands of Him who, we believed, had sent us forth on this quest. Then, when we began to make arrangements for the night, the doctor was up again, and refused to sleep in the lodge. We

told him it was cleaner and safer and more politic to do so; but, no, he was obstinate; and finally we compromised by Mr. Snider and the doctor making their bed under the wagon, and merely pulling the tent over this. Neither of them thought of the two or three hundred pounds of fresh meat killed that day, and now in that wagon; and I had enough of the Old Man in me to not mention that possibly this meat would drip, drip on them the long night through. However, what did a little blood matter anyway? We might, every one of us, be weltering in our own blood before morning.

## CHAPTER VI.

Clamoring for our blood—Learn some Blackfoot—Leave Blackfoot camp—Down the Bow Valley—Doctor loses his teeth.

It was now well on in September, and the nights were growing long; so we sat around the buffalo-chip fire in the lodge, and as I had an interpreter in one of the young Blackfeet, the chief and myself talked on into the night. When we did lie down, I could not sleep because of strange noises, peculiar drum notes, distinct night calls in and around the camp, and away in the distance the howling of bands of big buffalo wolves, and the shrill barking of coyotes and the answering barkings and howlings of the myriads of dogs in camp, our sublime isolation from all help except the supernatural and my own sense of responsibility. The morning came, and I had not slept. Here were men who clamored for our blood; they had very strong reason to hate the white race. They came out of centuries of war with men of a kind. It was not the individual, but the portion of the race he came from, they warred upon. The white man had even recently insulted and injured and debauched and acted as the inveterate savage towards their people. Just now they were smarting because of wrongs perpetrated by white men. Was there any difference in white men? That was the question. And because these men

beside us were reasonable, therefore we were alive; therefore our scalps were still on our heads. All this I knew, and almost wondered when the day came and the sun again gilded and glorified the fair earth. It was a break in the current of thought to look in on our gentlemen who had slept under the wagon. The bloody drip, drip was much in evidence, and the lesson was humbly accepted by the doctor. There was no more hesitation on his part when breakfast was announced; but then he was anxious that someone should go out and keep guard over his bed and belongings in the wagon; so I intimated as much to the chief, who sent out his general servant, a big, fat, greasy fellow, who, in order to take good care of the doctor's bed, got into it, and went off to sleep in his turn.

Thus we found him after breakfast and morning prayers in the chief's camp. This was surely out of the frying-pan into the fire. However this just about finished the nonsense on the part of our doctor for this time.

From my young Blackfoot friend I learned that there was a Cree woman in the camp. She had been captured in one of their war expeditions, and had been adopted by the tribe, and I asked him to hunt her up and bring her to me, which he did. I found she spoke her mother tongue perfectly, and was equally as capable in Blackfoot. I asked her if she would interpret for me in a service, and, after some coaxing, she consented. I then told father and the doctor, and we arranged with the chief for

a gathering in the centre of the camp. Willie and myself, with father helping us, sang in Cree. The doctor led in prayer in English, and I followed in Cree, and I then talked to these strange people through my interpretest. She did well, and felt the message herself, as I was led to enlarge on the blessings accruing to all men because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On the part of our audience there was the finest decorum; chiefs, braves, warriors, hunters, women and children gave most reverent attention. Perhaps, in the lives of most of these people, this was the first service of the kind they had been present at. Some in that gathering that day were, in visage and appearance, not very reassuring as to what might happen before we were done with them; but our chief and his people were strongly about us, and it looked as if he wanted the whole camp to feel we were under his protection. All this was hopeful.

Thus the Sabbath passed. I cultivated the chief and my young friend. I learned quite a vocabulary of the Blackfoot language, and taught my teacher some Cree.

In the evening the chief asked me if he might say something to me in the interests of his people. I told him, on behalf of our party, we would gladly listen. Then he sent out for his leading men, and soon the lodge was full of strapping, big and fine-looking Indians, each and every one of these carrying himself with dignity and as a gentleman. I often asked myself, Who taught these wandering

people the art of bearing themselves with grace and perfection in style and manner, there being nothing clumsy or embarrassed about them? The chief's plaint was that, within recent years, white men coming in from the Long Knife country had brought in firewater; that this had done much harm to the Blackfeet and Bloods and Piegans and others; that these white men were bad and cruel; that many Indians had been killed by them; that his people had been desolated and impoverished and made ten-fold more wicked than they had been by these white men and their firewater. Could not something be done to stop this traffic? Could we, his guests, not do something for his people and this country?

I interpreted all this, and father told me to tell the chief and his people that he was glad to hear them on this question, and to assure the chief that he and all associated with him would do all in their power to effect a change in this country; that, in the North, where we came from, rumors of a sad condition in the South had come to us; but now that the chief had told him the facts he would stir himself. Moreover, we were now on our way to see for ourselves, and to reach the Missouri and return, having made all enquiries as to what was going on. Father further told the chief that his son was coming out to live in this Southern country, and to do all he could to help all men for the better. The chief answered, "It makes me glad to hear these words."

Thus the Sabbath evening was spent in the Black-foot lodge. We were beginning to have confidence in this man. We were breathing more freely, and on all faces a better expression was observed. Of course, the critical time would come to-morrow morning, when we would desire to move on. However, I slept that night, and again the morning dawned.

This time, all our people slept in the lodge. As to our horses and equipment, I had given no thought. "Life is more than meat."

Breakfast and prayers over in the chief's lodge, the chief looked at me, and I nodded, and he sent some orders out, and presently our horses were brought up, looking well after the rest; and as we loaded and harnessed and saddled I noticed a corresponding stir in camp. Horses were being saddled; men in full war equipment were mounting, but around us were closing in the chief and my young friend who spoke some Cree, and many others, and with a motion from the chief I drove out of camp, and behind us, and around us, came the chief and his party. I noticed many others rush out a little way, but soon turn back.

The determined front of our friends said to these, "No, you will not do as you wish."

Steadily westward and southerly we went at a good trot, father and the chief at the head of our mounted escort.

For some eight or ten miles we thus travelled; then the chief rode back and said to me, "Now, John, travel far to-day and watch well to-night,"



and, with a warm clasp of the hand, he returned to his camp with his troop.

We did as he said, travelled far and watched well. That day's journey brought us to the verge of the foothills, and the next morning took us over some of these and down into the valley of the Bow, where the town of Cochrane is now situated.

During this morning, while ahead of our party looking out a route, I shot one of the biggest and fattest antelope I had ever seen. (If I had only thought to have preserved its head and neck!) He had a splendid pair of antlers, and altogether was a magnificent creature, as he stood and faced me some two hundred yards distant. Just as we attempted to cross the creek which comes out of the canyon, and at the spot where we desired to noon, we broke both of our whiffletrees, and while I was improvising fresh ones, the doctor and father got out their fishing tackle, and soon each of them came in with a fine string of trout.

The doctor was enthusiastic over the foothill country. It appealed to his Highland blood, even as it did to my own, and surely these magnificent hills and glorious valleys would stir any man's blood. Here was grass and water and rich soil, running brooks and bubbling springs and majestic river, and on every hand wealth and beauty.

We rolled up the valley of the Bow in the afternoon, and as far as the Ghost, and camped, and the next day rode up to the crossing, or what was known as the principal ford, and which spot later became the Morley Mission and Settlement.

We prospected for the site of the new mission. We gazed at the mountains in their majestic glory, and rode back to our camp and had a late dinner. In the meantime, a lone family of Mountain Stoneys had come to our camp. They were delighted to meet us, and I was glad to secure one of them as guide south as far as High River.

During the afternoon we tried for more fish; and while I was on one side of the Ghost, Doctor Taylor took the other, and we were doing very well, but presently a shout from the doctor drew my attention. "Brother John, come across and help me to find my teeth!" This made me laugh. Nevertheless, I mounted, forded the stream, and, fastening my horse, helped in the search. It seems the doctor, in his angler's excitement, had put some fishing tackle and also his set of teeth into the same pocket, and, forgetting all about the latter, had pulled out the tackle, and must unconsciously have pulled out the teeth, and these must have fallen into the swift-running water of the Ghost. It was a great loss on such a trip. We were a thousand miles or more from any dentist, and our diet was almost altogether meat. The matter was serious, and we searched accordingly. Father, noticing our peculiar movements, came and joined in the hunt; but, alas, no teeth could we find, and evening coming on, we were forced to give up the search. It was serious, and it was comical, and even the doctor, under the spell of the mountains, took the humorous view of his mishap.

## CHAPTER VII.

Ford the Bow River—Blackfoot method of catching eagles—  
Dry Rat shoots ducks on the Sabbath—Reach Fort Kipp—  
Country without Government—Cross the 49th parallel.

Early the next morning we took leave of our Stoney friends, and, with a twin son called William, we retraced our trail as far as the present Cochrane and then made a crossing of the Bow. The river was deep at this point for safe fording. However, we blocked up the wagon box as high as the standard would permit, and securely lashed this to the axle, and then put everything into the wagon sheet we could, and wrapping this up, also fastened this securely within the box, and, with the doctor on horseback among the rest of our party, I drove the wagon through. It was touch and go. The wagon lifted several times with the current, but my team was good, and presently we were over and most thankful. Since then, and after settlement came in, I can recall a large number of men and teams drowned in attempting what we successfully accomplished at this time. These mountain streams are always dangerous.

As for hundreds of miles we had come, so now we were travelling across country without a trail. This is hard on horses and rig, and most tiresome to men as well. But somebody has to do it. There have to be trail-makers and pathfinders; thus the

world is explored, and in due time man begins his mission of subjection. On across the country, where now the Springbank settlement dwells in prosperity, we forded the Elbow, and in turn, Fish and Pine Creeks, and camped for the second night in the forks of Sheep Creek, on the south branch.

Here we found a small party of Blackfeet, hunting for eagles for the adornment of war dresses, the tail feathers especially commanding a high price among these people. They caught the eagles by making pits, in which the hunter secreted himself, and his associate covered the mouth of the pit with sticks and grass, and laid pieces of fresh meat thereon; the eagle, alighting to gorge himself, was quietly seized from beneath, and, being pulled down, was strangled.

Our guide, William, could speak Blackfoot quite well, and thus we communicated with these wanderers. Here, the next morning, William left us to return to his people, and, by his direction, we reached High River by noon, driving over the hills and through what is now known as the Lineham country. After crossing High River, we came upon a faint trail, which had been made by the whiskey smugglers and wolfers, and on this we travelled over to Mosquito Creek.

This was now Saturday evening. No man in our party had been in this country previously; it was all new. We were most carefully guarding our camp and stock. The Dried Rat was one of the guard that night.

Shortly after daylight Sunday morning we were startled by a shot close to camp. Jumping out with my gun and pistol to find out what this meant, I saw Dried Rat coming up from the creek with both hands full of ducks.

I said to him, "What did you shoot for? Don't you know this is God's day?"

He looked dumbfounded, and said he did not know. I told him we did not hunt or travel or work on this day, except in dire necessity.

He said, "I will know after this."

There he stood, with the two strings of ducks, and we looked at each other, and he said, "What will I do with these?" I told him that he had better pick and clean them, for to throw them away now would be a greater sin than to kill them.

We steadily kept on the track of this wagon From Edmonton to where we were we had met Indians five times—twice in large camps, once in a few lodges, and twice the individual lodge. We had, with our circuitous route, travelled some four hundred miles and better, and everywhere it was good country, fully capable of bearing a dense population. If we had travelled in a direct line from Edmonton to this point on Mosquito Creek, we would have made it in about 250 miles, but I very much question if we would have seen a single human being. Sparse population and a great, big, wealthy land waiting for humanity to come and possess it.

We spent a quiet Sunday, horses and men rest-

ing, the latter in turn. On Monday morning we were away early and following the dim trail southward into the unknown. Our step was the steady jog, on past what we knew later as Pine Coulee, over to where the Willow Creek comes out of the Porcupine Hills. Later, we crossed this creek, and kept on down its west side and crossed the Old Man's, where the first Fort Macleod was built. Here we found a fresh track of a wagon, not many days old, and on the flat a little lower down we came upon the scene of a recent fight, several dead horses, which had been shot, revealing the tale of a skirmish.

We steadily kept on the track of this wagon trail, and towards the evening of the day came in sight of a fort down on the bottom, at the junction of the Old Man's River with the Belly River. This turned out to be Fort Kipp.

Here we met the first white men we had seen since leaving Edmonton, and, with one exception, they were a wild-looking lot, all but this one being more or less under the stimulus of alcohol, and all heavily armed. The fort was a strong wooden structure, and, with provisions and water, could, with a few resolute men, hold off a large body of Indians armed, as most of these were at this time, with the bow and arrow and old flintlock guns, only a very few as yet being in possession of repeating rifles and fixed ammunition.

To these men occupying this fort we were "curios," Missionaries, "men who would neither

drink nor trade in whiskey!" "Well, I'll be ———!" They studied us even as we did them.

The doctor and father and Mr. Snider were kept busy entertaining the crowd, and Willie and Dry Rat looked after the horses; I did what I could to find out what was between us and the Missouri River, which was our objective point.

In this I was very much helped by the one sober man. He courteously and intelligently gave me pointers, and I drew a rough sketch of the course and watering-places as he described to me the country ahead of us. The cook or chef of this fort was a Spaniard. He was especially kind to our party.

After supper, the horses having been looked after and the gates closed, Doctor Taylor gave them a talk on "The Land of the Bible," and we sang some hymns, and father led in prayer. Tears stood in some eyes, and all observed the best decorum, and as one of them said, "It was the ——— best thing he had been at in many years." Some of these men had seen better days. Others of them had grown up on the western frontier. A religious service was to them all a new experience. The Doctor's description of the "The Land of the Bible" caught their ears, and they were intensely interested.

In the morning most of these men decreed to accompany us to Whoopup. This was the next fort en route to Fort Benton. It was very evident that among these men life was very cheap; to kill

one another was thought little of, and to kill an Indian was a meritorious act. This kept coming out inadvertently in the conversation. This was the creed of the Great West across the line, and these men had brought this creed over into our country; and who was there to say them nay? We had no government; we had no one in authority; truly, just now "might was right."

On to Whoopup, across the Belly at Fort Kipp, and up the big hill, and out across the wide upland, and with our wild, uproarious, heavily armed escort, whooping and yelling and cursing, we drove and rode and wondered what might come next.

After a few miles it was a relief to have these men dash ahead and leave us to come on at our steady step. Whoopup was before us, and we wondered as to our reception.

Presently we looked down upon the junction of the St. Mary's and the Belly rivers, two deep valleys, quite well timbered with fine bottom lands of prairie intersecting. The scene was rather picturesque, but the crowd we might meet down there was causing somewhat of a tremor in our minds. However, here was the fort, strongly built of cottonwood and poplar logs, and further down was another post. Whoopup itself belonged to Healy & Hamilton, and the other post to a Mr. Weatherwax, or, as the boys called him, "Old Waxy," and when we came in contact with him we thought he was well named—cool, calculating, polished, using the finest of English, crafty. "Yes, gentlemen, we



are glad to see you travelling through our country. We wish you most heartily a *bon voyage*."

Here the Spaniard insisted on presenting us with several cans of fruit; and I might say this was our first introduction to such goods. In the North these were not known. Here there was a Mr. Waxter, otherwise "Dutch Fred," who took me to one side and impressed me with the thought that I would but have to mention his name, Fred Waxter, and this would be for myself and party an "open sesame" to all social and financial circles in Montana. "Yes, sir, you just bet your bottom dollar on that fact."

I thanked Mr. Waxter, and we acknowledged the present of the Spaniard with profound gratitude, and we shook hands repeatedly with our friend, Mr. Weatherwax, and, crossing the St. Mary's, proceeded to lunch on its southern bank. Here we struck out into the upland regions of sparse water privileges.

In Whoopup I had again come across my old friend, Gladstone. It was ten or eleven years since we were on the Saskatchewan together. I modestly enquired about him of a much-armed denizen of Whoopup. "Gladstone be ———; you mean Old Glad, ———. Come here." And my friend shifted his rifle to the other hand, and linked the released one into my arm and hurried me across the square of the fort to the blacksmith shop, where, in dust and sweat and grime, here was Old Glad. "I say,

Glad ———! Looky here, you blind old fool! Here is a gentleman asking for you, ———."

My guide had a very full vocabulary of a certain kind. "Glad" let up on the bellows and looked at me, and for a little did not recognize his old friend. Then, "Is it you, John?" and at once he gripped me with both hands, and introduced me to the crowd which had gathered as the Rev. John MacDougall, from the far North, and we shook hands all around most formally.

I then excused myself, telling Gladstone I hoped to have more time on my return trip.

We were seated on mother earth at our lunch on the banks of the St. Mary's, and had just opened some of the fruit cans presented to us by our friend, the Spaniard, when suddenly there fell upon our ears the most fearful whooping and yelling, with shooting at intervals, and as the noise was evidently approaching us we seized our weapons and waited.

Around the woods came a troop of horsemen, a wilder, swearing, whooping lot seldom could be seen. They were after us for some reason, that was plain; and they were evidently wild with whiskey. Right into the river they plunged, and never let up until they had surrounded our party. I can tell you I was *glad* to see "Glad" among them.

It had come to pass that almost immediately after we left Whoopup a party had come in from the northeast. These had been fighting with the Indians, and one man was brought in all "shot up." Then the rumor had got out that a doctor had just

passed through; so this party gathered up to come after the doctor, "Glad" had come along fearful that these wild fellows might do something rash. We had a time explaining to them the difference between medicine and divinity. Dr. Taylor and father had their hands full in this crowd, some of whom were most unreasonable.

Here was where I first met Mr. Davis, who later became the first representative for Alberta in the Dominion House. There he was, and of the wildest type. After a while Davis took sides with Glad, and they gave us up and returned; and we hustled the harness and the saddles on our horses, and set out to put the miles between us and them. From here, in spots, we had a clearly defined trail. Then at times all this would spread out and become almost lost in the bigness and wildness of this tremendous country. We made good time, and, thanks to the very accurate information given to me by the man at Fort Kipp, we found the watering-places, though, in one instance, we had to keep the buffalo away in order to have the water for our stock and selves. We saw great herds of buffalo.

It was in this country that I drove a bunch of cows at full speed alongside of our party, and, when opposite the wagon, shot a three-year-old heifer, the meat of which Dr. Taylor pronounced "the best in the world." Certainly it was good, and we took the most of it with us. And why should this not be the best of meat? No damp stables, or cellars under barns; no chance for tuber-

culosis in the life of these herds, out in the draughtless open, feeding on God's own pasture, the centuries having adapted the best and most nutritious grasses as the product of the soils and this climate; verily, this wild meat was the best we ever ate.

Presently, we were across the yet undefined, unsurveyed line, the 49th parallel. Somewhere here it must run, and for a few miles we were in doubt as to where we "were at"; then we could feel sure that we were in Uncle Sam's country.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Cross the Milk River—Down the big Alkali Flat—Meet Father and his Party—Reach Fort Benton—Terrible blizzard—Take shelter at a ranch.

We had crossed the Milk River, and had for some time held in view the Sweet Grass Mountains. We had passed the Rocky Springs, and had gone down the big Alkali Flat. We had crossed the Marias River, and had struck out for where we hoped to find the Pondura Springs, but we had gone a trifle too far west, and noon came and no water. Being anxious as to our stock and ourselves, I rode on in advance of my party and found the country through which we were passing entirely without water.

Thus night fell suddenly; but just before dark I thought I saw the tops of trees which, if so, would denote water. I now began to retrace my way, but night was on me quickly, and I rode and listened. I had seen a few bulls and quite a number of antelope during the afternoon. As I rode back in the night, I looked and listened, but the gallop of a bull, or the bound of an antelope, or the howl of a wolf was all I could hear, and the night was thickening and the smell of an approaching storm was becoming very apparent. I already felt the chill of it; but I kept on, and suddenly checked up my horse because of the flash of a light, which seemed to be right in front of me. This light, as I saw it,

seemed to come from the striking of flint with steel, and it might be a war party resting for a little, and someone trying to light his pipe.

So I watched my horse that he did not betray me, and let him move gently on. Again I saw a flash of light. This made me more cautious; but presently I perceived that I was climbing a slope, and now I knew that what I had seen were the flashings of a camp-fire in the distance. These had deceived me; and now from the summit of the hill I could plainly discern the fire.

Was this my party, or some whiskey smuggler, or a war party of Indians?

This was the question I must now solve. I rode on. By this time the approaching storm was chilling the air. I was lightly clad, but did not mind this much. What was the fire which, in the distance, was like a lone star in the thick darkness? Slowly and carefully I approached. Here I started a few bulls; then I stampeded some antelope, who, with a bleat, bounded away. Steadily on I went, now out of sight in the valley, and by and by I began to discern men in the glare of the faint fire of the buffalo chips. When I got near enough to distinguish forms, I counted and watched, and the number tallied with my party. This gave me more confidence, and I drew nearer; and as I was facing the rising wind, I could now hear these men speaking, and soon I heard my father's voice. Then I let my horse out, and soon was within the circle of the little fire. How glad these men were to see me! The Dried Rat was delighted. I told them that I

thought I saw the tops of trees as it grew dark, and this made us all hope for both wood and water on the morrow. But now the water of the clouds was beginning to strike our cheeks, and soon it would be both rain and snow, as indicated by the lowering of the temperature around us.

We put up tent in the lee of the wagon. We drove the pins in firmly, and guyed and braced as we best could, and, feeling that the bleak plain and storm would protect us from prowling men, we turned in. However, as the storm grew stronger and the wind became like a hurricane, I felt sure our tent would fall. Father and myself conferred, and we made up our minds to let it come down, and stay where we were, under the blankets, storm or no storm, until daybreak. I was sleeping between father and Dr. Taylor, and I told the doctor to keep covered up and stay quiet; but this he would not do, and as soon as the tent began to collapse he got up. I very foolishly got out also, more to let the doctor see we could not do better than let the tent come down on us. However, he was stubborn, and said it could be made to stay up.

I did what I could; but, seeing it was hopeless in the wind, which was now very violent, and as I was getting wet through, I said, "Doctor, get under your blankets quick; I am going to let this pole go in a minute."

Again he was stubborn; so I let go and jumped for my blankets, and the doctor saw he must submit to the inevitable. In the meantime, he got a good soaking, and, while I felt for him, I could

not but know it was his own fault, and I also was wet through and chilled because of his stubbornness. The rest of the party had very wisely remained under the bedding, where we all should have stayed.

When dawn came we were a cold lot of men; but the doctor was not only cold, but also glum and silent. Hurriedly we loaded up and made ready and started, the doctor and I in the wagon, our course as straight as I could make it for where I had seen the treetops last evening. On for miles, but not a word out of my fellow-traveller. Silent and solemn he sat beside me all those leagues, and while we had the wind behind us, nevertheless, it was cold. Sure enough, here were the trees, and in due time we looked down upon the valley of the Teton. Soon we were in shelter; very soon we had a great big wood fire.

In a short time the kettles were on, and the buffalo meat boiling. When the dinner was served, and the fire had done its work, and while we were eating, the doctor opened his mouth and said, "Brother John, I have dined on the stall-fed animals of Old England; I have eaten the Blue Grass beef of Kentucky; I have partaken of the meat which did feed on the shores of Galilee; but this meat which we are now eating beats them all." This was a fact, and this was an evidence of the stimulating force of meat and food.

That night we camped within sound of a cow-bell, and were cheered with its music. The next day we reached Fort Benton. This was



the head of navigation on the Missouri. Steamers came this far during the high water season all the way from St. Louis; steam brought freight here, a distance of over 3,000 miles, for three cents a pound, and sometimes less, while we had to pay in the North ten cents for a thousand miles. The difference was altogether in the manner of transport.

Benton was a typical far-Western town in the seventies. Here was a small garrison of United States troops, living in an adobe fort. The use of these troops was to chase "Ingins." You might kill an Indian; so much the better. White men might kill one another, which was often the case, and there was not much fuss made about it. Drinking and gambling and wild life was here rampant and bold. This was the centre of import trade for all the country west and north of here, mining, ranching, furs, robes, etc. Bull-whackers and mule-punchers and cowboys and general roustabouts were here in strong evidence. The big firms who controlled the trade of Montana were I. G. Baker & Co. and T. C. Power & Co.

In the former company were the Conrad brothers, William, Charles and Howard. From all these business men, during the years between 1873 and 1883, until the Canadian Pacific came to us, we received the greatest kindness and uniform courtesy. These men were the pioneers of trade and transport in Montana, and also what is now Southern Alberta. As yet there were no schools nor churches. As a prominent citizen said at that time

in my hearing, "Religion and education are at a very low ebb in this country." This was very apparent to us, for during the parts of two days we spent in Fort Benton, I feel sure that I heard more awful blasphemy and foul, obscene talk than I had in ten years on the Saskatchewan; and yet all these men were they who had come out of what is called civilization. If these were the only products of our modern progress, then, for God's sake and humanity's also, give us barbarism. Every man was armed; revolvers and knives and repeating rifles—all were on the person and to hand. The revolting swagger of some of these "savages" was most disgusting.

We soon found that this spot would for some time become our base of supply. We could, by coming to Benton, obtain our necessities in a 900-mile trip, as against going to Winnipeg or Fort Garry, which would mean from 1,800 to 2,000 miles of a journey. True, coming this way we had more dangerous rivers and a much wilder country to traverse; but the time saved would be to us the vital point. Here we were in touch with a stage line west to Helena, and on south to Utah. There had been a telegraph line, but the buffalo had scratched down the poles and carried the wire across the prairie.

It was at this place, on a stormy morning, with a heavy snowfall on, we bade Dr. Taylor, our friend and companion in many tribulations, as also in many pleasant experiences, good-bye. As we struck the trail for the North country and home,

he rolled away in the Concord coach and four for the southern and western mountains, to reach home by the Central Pacific. It was truly a wild day when we waved our hands to the Doctor, as he leaned out of the coach window, he to presently reach the railroad and the thronging centres of humanity, and we to return to isolation and extreme pioneering life.

The wind blew the snow with force right into our teeth, as we drove and rode northward over the bleak uplands of Montana. That night we took shelter at a ranch on the Teton, and the proprietor gave us a little 7x9 shack for the night. We had a small chimney fire, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could. During the evening one of the men to whom the shack was no doubt allotted as a sleeping-place came in and began to "redd up" a bit. He swept the little room, and, gathering all the debris and dirt towards the chimney, sent it in to burn. It seems that on the floor were quite a number of cartridges, and, either through ignorance or intent, he sent these into the fireplace with the accumulated dirt.

Presently the small room became the scene of some excitement. Bang! and off went a cartridge, and again another, which made the ashes and dirt fly. As we did not know how many cartridges there were, the monotony of the evening was broken by our watching for the explosions. This frontiersman was an exception in my experience. He was inhospitable. Generally the frontier life made all who came under its influence most hospitable and kind.

## CHAPTER IX.

Up the Teton—Blizzard continues—Buffalo hunts—Across the divide—Into the North Country—Cross Tail Creek.

Early the next morning we were gladly out of the shack into the storm, and kept on up the Teton to where we had struck its hospitable wood and grass some days previously. Here we camped, as it would have been folly to rush out on to the high plateau north of us in such weather as this. By this time the drifts were deep, and the air crisp and cold. With this storm strongly on, and the snow deepening, and the drifts piling up, it seemed a long way to Edmonton. However, we gathered wood and kept our fire big and brisk, and cooked our bannocks (for we had secured flour in Benton), and boiled or roasted our buffalo meat, and watched our horses, and guarded our camp, and told stories, and sang our hymns, and offered our prayer and praise, and laughed at the storm and distance.

In the early morning of the next day we pushed out into these as if they were friends, rather than foes; and, after all, they are our friends, "stormy wind fulfilling His word." On slowly, over the long upland divide between the Teton and the Marias rivers, and out across the country, facing the picturesque Rocky Springs country.

Here we again found buffalo, and I ran and killed

a very fine cow, the meat of which we piled into our wagon for our journey. Noonning at the spot where we killed the cow, I harnessed up a pair of bronchos. One of these we had brought with us from the North, and the other I had bought at Benton from a Jew, and, because of this, I named my purchase "Solomon." "Solomon" and "Besho" were wild in the harness, and cut up a lot; but I ran them around to accustom them to the new experience, and, when ready, put them over the tongue, and father and I climbed into the wagon, and I let them go. As we had all out-of-doors to move in, and as long as we kept northward, what mattered the speed?

For the first few miles the pace was terrific; badger holes and dust pans and coulees were passed in quick succession, and it was some time before we got our bronchos down to a steady travelling trot. Here the herds of buffalo had smashed up the drifts of snow and helped us in that much across the plain. During this afternoon we came to dense masses of these wild cattle. They lined up to let us pass through, so it seemed. As we drove through them I saw several buffalo oxen, huge brutes, towering up above the others, and, as usual, in fine condition. It was a great sight, and we forgot the keen cold and early snowstorm in looking upon these tens of thousands of God's unbranded cattle.

We were now approaching the high lands between the Alkali Flat and the Milk River. Here, across the summit, we were again into snow, deep and hard to travel through, and we turned out the

bronchos to put in a heavier team to pull through this. I now took to the saddle, and telling father to look out for a sign from me, and to come straight to it if I made one, I then rode off ahead to look for a battleground which I had been told about, where the Grovaunts and Piegans had fought during this past summer. I knew that in all probability lodge poles and picket pins would be in evidence in such a place, as these Indians in their stampede and hurry would leave these behind them; and even so I found the spot, and was glad, for the night promised to be a cold one, and we wanted fire and heat to cook by, as well as to warm us and our camp.

I found that here there had been a big fight. There were evidences of many lodges, and many dead horses were lying about; but here were the picket pins and lodge poles and travois which had been abandoned, and which I now proceeded to gather; and before my party came in sight upon the distant ridge, I had a good fire on, and this they saw and came straight to, down the long slope and across the Milk River.

We camped upon the scene of the battle, and were thankful, not that men fought and killed, but for the fuel they had left, and which now, in this storm, came so opportunely for our benefit.

The next day there came a change of weather, and by noon we were well out of the drifts, and across the great divide between the Missouri and the Saskatchewan. We were now on the northern slope of the continent, and as the country soon dried up

from the effects of the storm, we rolled homeward fast. Again we were at Whoopup, and found things quieter—not so many wolfers and wild men about. Here we found the victim of the recent fight, breathing through holes in his back. Father did what he could for him, and knelt for a moment in prayer by his couch, and on we went, for the season was late and the distance far.

It was Saturday, and we were looking forward to a quiet Sunday on Willow Creek; but when we came in sight of the Old Man's Valley, what should we see but a large camp of Indians, several hundred lodges. These proved to be Bloods. It was good-bye to rest and tranquility, as we must now nerve up, and watch and work in the presence of continuous danger, until we could, if possible, move on from these people. In a very short time we were surrounded by a crowd of mounted men, heavily armed; indeed, these were the best-armed Indians I had yet seen.

I told them we would ford the Old Man's and Willow Creek and camp and spend two nights in this vicinity, and they escorted us to our camp, and remained until dark, taking stock of us and our arms and general outfit. They saw we were distinct from the white men they had met of recent years, and they seemed to appreciate the difference. Promising to come back "A-pin-a-koos" (to-morrow), we were left to double-guard our camp and wait and watch, and the morning came, and our stock and we were still intact.

What a long, weary day that was! I have driven

many miles, and spoken four times in a day, but the strain of that Sunday on the bank of the Willow is with me yet. A change of mood, an incident that might happen at any time, and we, with our little company, would be as nothing before this multitude. All day our camp was the scene of many comings and goings. They would come singly and in crowds, and we did what we could to communicate with them, and instil confidence, if possible; but we were sorely in need of an interpreter. Father left me to handle these wild fellows, and I expended all my Blackfoot and pantomime and sign language, and also learned a great deal more, and was a glad man when, late at night the last one had gone, and, it being my turn, I retired. Someone else was on duty, and I was weary in both mind and body, and soon went to sleep. In a very short time I was awakened by a noise near by, and catching up my gun, jumped out, to find that our guard, Mr. Snider and Willie, had a prisoner. They had caught him in the very act of attempting to steal father's big horse, Jack. The prisoner was just about naked, and of course he expected to die. However, we gave him a good scare, and I put him under the wagon and told him if he moved we would shoot him. Again I tried to rest, and it was now midnight and fine moonlight; so I determined to strike out, and, if fortunate, be far away by daylight. Rousing up those who were asleep, we made ready without making any noise. When about to start we gave our prisoner his freedom. He was astonished and overwhelmed, and expressed his



gratitude, and said, "If it had been any other men, either white men or red men, they would have killed me." He gave his whip and lariat to us, and vowed he would never steal any more horses.

Now we were away, and driving straight for the North country. When morning came we were a long distance from the Blood Indian camp. Nevertheless, that did not hinder us from keeping a good watch on our rear. We were not following any trail, and were away east of our course when coming south. During the day I ran and killed another splendid cow, and we took all of the meat and camped near the Bow River. This we crossed the next day, a little west of where the town of Gleichen is now situated. This crossing was rather risky, but, with extra precaution, we got through without accident. Travelling north and south in Alberta one can always sing, "Many more rivers to cross."

Pulling out up the valley of the Bow at this point, there is a sharp, peculiarly shaped hill, and quite a landmark, called by the Crees "The stone across" ("A-kam-a-se-ne"). I had heard of it from warriors and travellers, but now saw it for the first time; and here I gave father, who was sitting with me in the wagon, a proof of the wonderful vision Nature had endowed me with. We were still a long way from the hill when I saw an Indian crawling to the summit. I watched him until I saw him stretched on the highest peak, and said to father, "Do you see that hill?"

"Yes."

"Well, there is an Indian stretched on its summit, watching us. If he is alone, he will show himself to us by and by. If he is but a scout of a party, then we must be ready."

I then passed the word to our people to gradually close up, and for every man to hold himself in readiness. Father had so often experienced the far-reaching power of my natural eyesight that he had no doubt whatever. However, there were some in our party who could not understand why John should know of the vicinity of men, and they asked themselves, Was it supernatural?

Why, yes, of course, even as all endowment is supernatural.

Presently, when we had passed the base of the hill, we heard the clear, harmonious voice of a full-lunged warrior singing a peace song.

"Ah, he is alone," said I to father, "and he will come up to us," and presently out from behind another hill came our friend. He was a fine-looking fellow, in full plainsman's costume, and he sat his horse as to the manner born, and he continued his song until he came to us. He said his party was moving south farther east; that they had been to Edmonton; that when he saw us he knew we were not Long Knives. His name was Eagle Ribs (Pe-to-pe-kis), quite a renowned war chief. I told him that I was coming right out at once to the mountains on the Bow River, and would hope to see him during the winter which was approaching.

He took a great fancy to my rifle, and I said,

"You bring me a 'good horse when I come out, and I will let you have this rifle."

He smiled and answered, "Remember, you have said it, and that rifle is mine." And so it was some few months later, for he came in with the horse, and got his gun.

But, more than this, I had another new friend at court, and this was most important to us. We parted from Eagle Ribs in mutual confidence. On to the Big Red Deer, where a labyrinth of ravines blocked our course, and we had to swing up its south bank and look for a crossing.

Leaving my party in the early morning of the day, they to keep out along the ridge above the ravines, I rode away in search of a crossing. This meant three requisites—an approach, a ford and a departure.

All day I kept up the stream, saw deer and antelope and buffalo, but as we had plenty of meat I did not molest them. Moreover, I had left my rifle, and was only armed with my big Smith & Wesson revolver, 42-calibre.

I saw some of the most picturesque spots along the valley one could imagine. Riding on a buffalo trail, I came to a cut bank, and the trail wound in and out on the edge of a precipice, strange, weird formations; and as I could not see any distance before me, presently I was astonished to meet a procession of great bulls. The leader, a huge monster, stood, even as I and my horse stood, and we looked at each other. Must I retrace my way to the last

flat? I was loath to do this. Finally, I gave a great shout, which the canyon echoed, and the long stream of bulls scrambled around in their tracks and retraced their steps; and I rode at the rear of the procession and admired their courtesy, and took stock of their size and hugeness, and was thankful that they did not know their strength.

On we went, buffalo and man, until we came to the bend of the river, where there was room, and my concessive friends scampered up the prairie flat and I rode on looking for a ford. It was evening before I found what I wanted, that is, a possible route on both sides of the river, and a ford which, while deep, had a smooth bottom and quiet current. Thankful for my find, I took the long climb up the south bank and out on to the big plateau.

Where was my party? The sun was low, and the night promised to be a cold one.

I rode to the highest ground and surveyed the scene. Not a soul in sight. As the air was quiet, I fired a shot, and listened, but no answer came. However, my shot started a buck antelope, and he cantered straight for me. Leaving my horse on the hill, I ran to meet the antelope. When next we saw each other we were about 150 yards apart. I wanted a response to my shot if any of my party should hear it; but if I could secure the buck also I was nothing loath to do so. Accordingly, I took aim, and my first ball killed him; but there he stood, and I fired all the remaining cartridges out of my revolver, and still he stood, with head up,

staring at me. I then refilled my gun and approached my game slowly. I drew near, watching the buck, but all the while listening for an answer to my shots. However, none came; and now I was close upon the fine fellow, who stood as a thing of life before me, and yet was dead. I held my gun ready, but as I reached out my hand to grasp him by the antlers, he shook and fell. Three of my bullets had gone right through his vitals. The first shot had killed him, but, standing straight to me, he was braced and did not fall. I ran back to my horse and brought him to my kill. Then I opened the antelope, and took out the paunch and entrails and placed him to bleed, then covered him with a big silk handkerchief I had over my shoulder, weighting this down with some stones.

I then mounted my horse and rode on, anxiously looking for my party. Thus darkness came upon the scene, and I looked and listened, and not until late did I see the glimmer of a fire in the distance. This might be my party or prove to be my enemies. Carefully I scouted towards the place, and came to a deep ravine. Going down into this, I followed it up in the darkness to the firelight. This proved to be our party, and once again we were delighted to be reunited, and all were glad to hear of my success. The next morning we made the south shore of the river for noon, picking up the antelope en route. After lunch we bolstered up the box of our wagon, and in due time were across the Red Deer.

What a wonderful land of river and soil and rich grass and beautiful landscapes! Some countries, after hundreds of years of settlement, are not as favored in readiness and beauty and progress as this great big land we have been travelling through for the last thirteen years already is. Millions of acres and unlimited possibilities!

Thus we thought and thus we conferred, as we climbed to the rich upland and moved on into the great North. We crossed the Tail Creek near its inflow from Buffalo Lake. We kept the west side of the lake, and also that of the Red Deer Lake, and now were in familiar ground for me. I had feasted and fasted and ridden and walked in many directions through this region. I had hunted owls and rabbits and ducks and chicken and geese and swan and deer and elk and moose and bear and buffalo and beaver and muskrat, and lived on a meat and fowl diet straight, without sauce other than hunger. I had held meetings in lodges, and on the hills, and in the valleys. Why, this was a part of my big parish which, in its bigness, I had never been able to compass, though forever moving and constantly on the road. And here we were again, rushing through, for our step was quick and steady and persistent. We were moving rapidly.

Here my friend, The Dried Rat, left us to seek his own people. He gripped my hand when parting, and thanked me.

He said, "I will never forget either your kindness nor yet your counsel and prayers, John; from

now on I am a different man. May the Great Spirit bless you, my friend."

Thus this faithful fellow parted with us.

Presently we were at one of the lower crossings of the Battle River, and in due time at the Peace Hills, and then on to Edmonton. When we came in sight of the old fort, the flag went up. There was general rejoicing. They had been looking for us for days. All manner of rumors had come. "We were killed." My brother David, who had come on up to Edmonton in order to move out with me to the mountains, was now organizing a party to go and seek us. But here we were, and the fort and settlement were glad. Father and the rest of our party were now at the end of their journey, but mine would now really begin.

## CHAPTER X.

Ford the Saskatchewan—In the Peace Hills—Meet Muddy Bull  
—Ford the Red Deer—Great buffalo chase—Violent snow-  
storm—Cross the Dog Pond into foothill country—Land a  
revelation to us—Move into Bow Valley.

Already it was the first of November, and we must hurry. My man, Donald, was on hand, cattle and horses in good shape and carts ready. My brother David was ready with his outfit. Several English and French mixed-blood families asked permission to join our party. Two white men who were travelling through the country came and asked the same privilege. Our only proviso was no whiskey or firewater in any shape.

“We were as the forlorn hope, everybody said, “running great risks.”

Father said, “It is settled,” and gave us his blessing.

We forded the Saskatchewan with ice floating down its swift current. We climbed the big hill and camped on the south side, near Drunken Lake. We at once organized our party. The days were short and the nights cold. Mrs. McDougall drove a team. Flora, our eldest daughter, rode in the saddle, and brought up the loose stock. My brother and self and some of our native company were the outriders of the party, in advance, on the flanks,



and at the rear. Donald, the staid and steady, drove the lead cart, and thus we rolled south into the new country.

We spent our first Sunday among the Peace Hills. On the southern slope of these hills the city of Wetaskiwin is now situated. In 1873 this was the wilderness primeval. Here a camp of Crees and a party of Blackfeet, in running buffalo, ran into one another, and the mutual surprise and the need of the Blackfeet to move on into Edmonton for trade purposes caused them to make a temporary peace. Therefore the name Wetuskewin, "Having Peace." We kept guard, and held meetings, and spent a quiet, peaceful Sabbath, and rolled away early Monday morning in the frost and chill across the Bears' Hill plain.

About the middle of this plain we fell in with our old friend, Muddy Bull, who was moving in to Pigeon Lake. He made us a present of some fine dried meat, which was most acceptable to our commissariat. Muddy Bull and his wife, Barbara, were old friends of mine, and certainly these simple people were among the salt of the earth.

Many a night during the last ten years I had spent in their hospitable lodge. We had starved and feasted and watched and prayed together, and now this short accidental meeting was a mutual pleasure. Our food on this journey was largely pemmican. It was too late in the season for ducks and geese. Chickens and rabbits we got a few of en route. All in our party were eagerly looking forward to finding buffalo south of the Red Deer.

It was Thursday noon when, having forded the Red Deer, we lunched on the south side, and, telling my man to hug the river on account of water, my brother and I rode out eastward and southward in search of game, as also reconnoitering the country ahead of our party. We skirted the Antler Hills, and climbed to the summit of the Cree Hills, and presently discovered a band of about forty bulls in the valley west of the hill. The day was far gone, but we rode down under cover and ran them. David had brought up from the East a thoroughbred mare called "Favorite," and that very morning he had surprised me by stumping me to trade for a brown horse I owned, and we had changed our saddles, and each was on his new mount at this time. I found the little mare very speedy, and soon was among the bulls, and had the best one picked out, and ran the mare at him. She overhauled the huge fellow in a very short time, and I made a good shot and killed him.

Here was a change of diet for our camp, and we carefully skinned and cut up the big brute. By the time we were through with stringing some meat to take back to camp, and had put the rest away as securely as we could, to be called for the next day, it was long after dark. It took us until late that night to find our camp, and when we did, it was greatly to the relief of all in it. Then we brought fresh meat. This was most acceptable. Moreover, the chances were that in a day or two we would strike the herds. The next night we camped south of where the town of Innisfail is now situated, and

during that night our horses were stampeded. At first we thought it might be a war party, but later, we found it was a band of buffalo, because we heard the bleat of the calves, and then we knew that soon our camp would be refreshed by choice meat.

In those days the item of food was much to the front, and there were no storehouses standing as a basis of supply. There were many times when men talked and thought and dreamed about "Where-with shall we be fed?" The evidences about us at this time were that soon we would have plenty, and all were joyous in the prospect. Scouting in advance the next day, I found a good spring of water, and, a mile or two beyond this, buffalo in great numbers; so I concluded to camp my party beside the spring, and for the balance of the day arrange a general hunt. Riding back, I signed to Donald, and he came straight for the spring. Hurriedly lunching, we left part to put up tents and guard camp, and the rest of us saddled up and went forth to the hunt.

Just as we were starting, one of the mixed-bloods in our company threw out a challenge: "Let us see who will bring in the biggest backfats."

"Do you hear that, John?" said my brother.

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, don't you let them beat you."

These were my instructions.

I answered, "A man can but do his best."

However, we had a great herd to pick and choose from. Almost immediately I shot a very fine cow.

I was riding "Favorite," and she flew into the herd, and, though fresh to this work, took to it as if bred on the plain. Placing the cow in position for skinning, I began to think that she was not quite fat enough to cover the challenge; so I remounted and rode north a little way, and here I was joined by my brother David. We saw a fine large bunch coming out of the bluffs of timber, and, as we approached them, I scanned them closely. Then they started on the quick run, and I saw a rider coming after them. Just then my eye caught sight of the animal I wanted. There she was, a huge, massive cow, the fattest I had ever seen.

I thought to myself, "If yon fellow has seen her it will be a race between us for that fat cow."

However, here were many hundreds packed together, and all on the dead run. I kept my eye on that cow and let my blood beast out, and she responded nobly. I knew afar off that if I could catch and kill this animal there would be no better backfats brought into camp that day. Already the other man was pressing the rear of the herd. My mount was coming on finely, but the real race was still before us. Would the little mare hold out? That was the question. On we went. Soon we were opposite the hunter; now we were gaining on him.

Presently we were splitting the herd. Away yonder near the head of the bunch was my pick. The nearer I got the faster she ran, and the more I saw

that this kill, if I could accomplish it, would surpass all my previous records in the killing of fat animals, and I had some good ones. I chirped quietly to the thoroughbred under me, and as if it was nothing she bounded into a quicker pace. I said to myself, "If we meet no accidents we will have her." Again I chirped, and, like a flash, my horse answered me. Now I was near enough, and watching my chance, and presently I fired, and down she dropped. Very soon my brother was on the spot, and we had placed the cow for being butchered. Whipping out his knife, he cut out the small "boss," and, holding this up, smiled exultantly. There would be no fatter buffalo killed by our party; of this we felt sure. We had won. Favorite and her rider took the medal that day.

Spending a quiet Sunday beside the spring, we continued our journey on Monday and found some more springs to camp beside that night. During the afternoon, while scouting ahead, I killed two fine cows, and as our two English friends travelling with us were not hunters, I gave one of these buffalo to them. In doing this, I took the traveller, with his horse and cart, to the animal, and very carefully pointed out to him the course we were moving on. Then I took one of my men and the cart and brought in the meat of the other cow.

Some time after dark the second Englishman came to my lodge and enquired about his companion. He said he was missing. The night was very dark, and as there were bluffs of timber, and

the lost man had the meat of a whole buffalo, we did not feel so very anxious. The only danger was the possibility of his falling in with a war party.

During the night a violent snowstorm came on, and when the morning dawned the heavens about us were thick with snow. One could see but a little way. I called for volunteers, but my brother was the only one who turned out with me to search for our lost fellow-traveller.

It was a wild morning as we retraced our trail and built up our theory as to what might have happened to the lost man. Studying the topography of the country, as we remembered it, and considering the course of the storm, we decided on a plan of action, and religiously followed this, and were rewarded after a time by finding a clue, and following this, we came upon our man, and were to him as glorious deliverers. Most certainly we were delighted to find the poor fellow safe and sound. He had lost the faint trail our caravan had made. The night was so dark and the storm came on with such vigor that he was completely lost. We brought him to camp; but what surprised me was the absolute apathy of his companion in the face of all this. Ordinary humane instinct seemed to be altogether absent in this man; indeed, both of these white men were samples of a devolution which, I am sorry to note, a one-sided kind of civilization is sure to produce.

The storm continuing, we did not move camp

until the next day. Then we crossed the Dog Pond, a tributary of the Little Red Deer, and made our way into the foothill country, for we were now steadily approaching the mountains. Some of our party had never seen the mountains until now. Indeed, the whole land was a revelation to every one of us. We were making across country, where wheels had hitherto never rolled, making crossings of rivers where neither pick nor shovel had been used to make approaches to the stream. A timber-covered ridge would loom up in the distance to block our way; and behold, as we came up to it, a hitherto unseen natural roadway would open up, and on we went. We were the pioneers. The centuries had prepared the way. Truly, to the capable and thoughtful mind, here was the homing land of the millions who would come in God's good time, when the other portions of the world were ready; when the Master Teacher would say, "Move up," then the flood-tides of immigration would people this wonderful land we were now prospecting and leading the way into.

Friday night we camped south of the second crossing of the Dog Pond. During the night our guards were startled, and every one of us jumped to arms as we became aware that a party was approaching. However, our alarm was appeased when we learned that these were Mountain Stoney, whose camp was moving south to the westward of our course. One of the chiefs, Bear's Paw, was with this company. They were out searching for one

of their leading men, who had mysteriously disappeared some few days before. He had gone out hunting. He was, to my knowledge, a famous wood hunter, and a fine Christian character and also a very brave man. Several times we had been on dangerous trips together, and you could depend on this man, for whom all the camp of his fellows were now mourning. Later, we found that he had been killed by a party of Blood Indians, who, hearing him shoot, had crawled upon and slain my friend without giving him a chance for his life. We had come past the scene of this recent murder, as we hunted out our way through the foothills. The first missionary had baptized this man Enoch, and his wife Eunice, but now "Enoch was not."

Saturday we moved on into the valley of the Bow, and up this scenic spot to the mouth of the Ghost. It was ticklish work taking our carts and wagons down the steep, ungraded hill at this point; but, using extra precaution, we succeeded, and, crossing the Ghost River, encamped in the valley. Here the Mountain Stoneys met us and camped beside our party, and expressed great satisfaction at our coming.

For thirty years some of these mountain men had looked and longed for a missionary, and now he had come. He was here. Somewhere in this vicinity he would establish a mission, and this would be to them a centre, a house of refuge, a court of appeal. Thus the realization of their hope made them glad.



All day Sunday we were busy, preaching, singing, praying, baptizing, marrying, answering questions, and teaching these eager people as we were able. In the meanwhile we were studying hard ourselves. Here was new material, altogether different in many ways from any people we had lived amongst heretofore. Here were men familiar with the strong, energetic and constantly exciting and stimulating side of life. The mountains, with snow-slides, and mud-slides, and rock-slides, and sudden avalanches, were their birthplace and hunting grounds. Impetuous, tumbling, rushing, raging mountain streams were their swimming schools. Grizzlies and mountain lions and wildcats were their constant game. Blackfeet, Bloods, Piegans, Sarcees, and often Crees, were their perennial enemies. To run down moose and elk and lynx on foot was their common sport. To climb and carry and starve and feast were their frequent experiences. Among nomads these men excelled; from the head waters of the Missouri to those of the Athabasca, from the Columbia to the heart of the great plains, these people roamed and hunted and fought and conquered. They were a terror to the plain tribes. Before the new evangel reached them, they were inveterate gamblers, and often killed the people of their own tribe in these mad scenes of intense excitement. Such were our new parishioners, and we felt that we needed a large measure of tact and patience to manage and keep the peace with these wild, nervous tribes. Moreover, there

had come in just now the illegal and baneful traffic in alcohol and forty-rod whiskey, and while these Stoney had thus far kept away from this evil and withstood all the blandishments of the cunning trader, yet they had come into contact with the lawlessness and brutality and absolute selfishness of the white man. They were familiar with massacre and crime, originated and carried on by the white man, and his invention, firewater, and new kinds of guns, the like of which these people had never seen, but had heard of from Blackfoot and Blood during their short periods of peace. The wild young fellows in the Stoney camp were beginning to class all white men as alike, and questioning the realness of the faith he had brought with him; these looked upon us and our mission with doubt and suspicion. Thus we were in the face of a great deal which the earlier missionary had not to meet. A serious change was on, and we could feel its presence.

We were fortunate in our meetings at this time in securing the services of a splendid interpreter. James Dickson was the name given to this man by Robert Rundle, the first missionary of any church to visit the country of these people. James was a linguist, had the Cree and Stoney equally well, and could speak Kootenay and Blackfoot also very well. He was thoroughly in sympathy with us, and fired up and became intense, even as we did in our illustrations. He saw, he felt; and between us, and with the blessing of God, we gathered the crowd and kept them, and men's hearts were stirred, and

even the wild crowd attended all these gatherings, and we were hopeful.

Monday we moved on up the valley, and camped beside the creek which has become the boundary line between the reserve, on the north side, and the English-speaking settlement. Part of the day David and myself spent in looking up a location for wintering.

## CHAPTER XI.

Determine to build—Sawpits erected—Finish our fort—Kept alert all night by Blackfeet—Start for Edmonton—Old buffalo trails our bridle path.

It was now late in November. We wanted shelter and as much safety as possible. We knew that the nearer the woods we were the safer we should be from the plains Indians. After riding a goodly number of miles, we came back to camp, determined to pull up into the hills on the north side, and build on the bank of a beautiful little spring lake. Here we would be in the timber, and still on the edge of the plains. Tuesday morning we guided our company up from the valley and camped upon the spot, where it was very doubtful in the minds of many of our friends that we should be able to hold out for very long. Our Stoney friends camped in our vicinity for a few days, and we were kept busy with these in counsel and meetings. We hoped that they would become our firm allies, and eventually, through them, we would gain influence over the other tribes.

In the meantime we laid out our fort, and apportioned to each one their part therein. I took for my men and self two sides of the square, my brother one side, and the people who came with us the other. All hands went to work at once to build their

portion—solid walls on the outside and small parchment windows, and all doors on the inside.

By Tuesday evening foundations were laid, and the next day sawpits were erected and building and making lumber by whipsaw were going on with a rush. As stoves were not in vogue at the time, we had to build chimneys. I was the sole owner of a cook-stove, and this was my first. Thirteen years in the North-West without a stove!

I built the chimney in our own quarters, and was glad, when finished, to find it a great success. We levelled the ground in the kitchen end of our house and put the cook-stove up there, and we floored the other half of the big room with the new sawn lumber, and partitioned that part about two-thirds of the way across, and did all this so that, on the following Tuesday, just one week from our camping on the spot, Mrs. McDougall moved in from the smoky lodge into our new home at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. She then held the distinguished honor of being the only white woman in all this big region.

During the first week some Blackfeet came to us. They would not have dared to do this if they did not rely on our influence to keep the peace between them and the Stoneys; and in this we were somewhat encouraged, for it showed what these people thought. However, it took some tact and diplomacy to keep things quiet. To work hard all day and be on the alert all night; to feel that at any moment the war whoop may sound is a state and condition that

is hard on the nerves and makes one wish for a change.

At the end of two weeks our fort was finished, and all our folk safely housed inside its walls. The majority of the Stoneys had gone south, and more of another band had come in from the North. These were of my friend Jacob's band. By this time our larder was well-nigh empty. Our pemmican and fresh buffalo meat did not last long, for we were a people practically of one diet, and now, with our fort built, we could divide our forces, and half of these go out on to the plains for meat.

While we were building our fort, our horses were being guarded between us and the mountains. These were now brought in, and we selected those we wanted and sent the others back; and away we went in search of food and to look up the wandering herds. Our third day out we came to buffalo, and were fortunate in finding cows at once, and the kill began.

We took a circle to the north, and came to the point of timber near the Lone Pine, east of where the town of Olds now is situated. It was here I had a double fall. I charged a bunch of cows and calves and came up to them splendidly. The snow was pretty general, and in places in deep drifts. I had shot a cow, and was pressing my horse after another, when he lost his feet in a badger hole, and fell, and sent me head first into a snowdrift. When I scrambled up and out of this and got my face and eyes free from the snow, my horse was getting on

to his feet also; but where was my gun? Hurriedly looking around, I saw a hole in the drift which looked as if my gun might have gone in there; so I began a vigorous kicking in the snow, and after a considerable search my feet struck the gun. This I grabbed, and, jumping on to my horse, sent him after the herd. These were now quite a distance away; but my horse was a splendid fellow, and, while he was rushing after our game, I was taking the snow out of my gun. To do this, I had to take the cleaning-rods out of the gun stock and screw them together, and then with this work the snow out of the barrel. All this had to be done with bare hands, and the temperature was away down below zero.

Having cleaned my gun, I now drove after the buffalo, and, coming up, shot one, and, pumping in another cartridge, was about to shoot again, when, for the second time, away went my horse's legs from under him; this time it was not on a soft bed of snow, but on the summit of a small hill on the prairie, and hard-frozen, upon which we fell, and I went bounding on for several yards before I reached the end of the momentum of the fall.

When we got up, my horse and I, from that tumble, we looked at each other, and mutually concluded we would not run any more buffalo for that day. We were both stiff and sore, and by the time I had the meat of my two cows into camp that night I was both sick and tired. When we were fully loaded, we were about forty miles from our home,

and my brother suggested that I go on to the fort. We had the two Englishmen with us, and one of them signified his desire to go on with me. We nooned with the party and then left them. I felt anxious about Ghost River, and kept the old standard gait up in order, if possible, to cross it before dark; but my companion hung on behind, and notwithstanding all my mild or wild exhortations, began to show signs of playing out, and I could not rush on and leave him; so it was long after dark when we came to the Ghost, and, with some extra trouble and considerable danger, got across through its ice and currents. Then up the dark valley for six miles; then back into the big foothills for another three miles; and oh, how that weak-willed sinner of a white man worried me. Twice I lost him in the valley, and again, after a lot of anxiety and hunting, found the fellow. At last I lost patience and drove him, horse and man, before me, and for a little time he went up through the thick darkness of the valley at a tremendous speed. Then my heart softened, and I slowed up out of pity for the tenderfoot, and again, when within a quarter of a mile from the fort, I had to gallop back and rouse up this sluggish degenerate. I knew very well there would be no sleep for me if I was not sure of his arrival. Thus, really, it was pure selfishness on my part which made me so solicitous about my fellow; and I am afraid that this is after all at the bottom of a good many of our apparently good and philanthropic actions.



With these loads of meat in our storehouses, and with our fort in good shape, we felt easier for the present, and were thankful.

All this time some straggling Indians had been camped in our vicinity. Some had been sick, and while I was away on the hunt Mrs. McDougall looked after my patients. One of these was the wife of an eccentric, who went by the long name of "Who Follows on the Trail," or "Now-wa-ye-ma-shees." This woman had been sick for a long time, but our treatment seemed to fit, and she was now convalescing fast. As the camp to which this family belonged had gone south some time since, this family started to live out the name of the head thereof, and follow on the trail. They had but two horses in the party, and when some three or four days south the Blackfeet ran these off; and now Mr. "Who Follows on the Trail" was strapped, or, as he would describe himself, "was like a moulting duck." However, he did not sit down and weep; nay, verily, he moved by dint of heavy packing his wife and children and their belongings into a hidden spot nearer the mountains, and then set off alone to interview the Blackfeet. This he did to the tune of twelve horses, and, running these up to the mountains, picked up his family and went on his way rejoicing. Coming up to the large camp, old Bear's Paw, the chief, enquired of the trailer: "How is this? You had but two horses when we left you? Where did you find the other ten?" Then Mr. "Who Follows on the Trail" told the chief what

had come to pass, and how he had retaliated. The chief said: "As they stole your horses in the first place, you can pick two out of the bunch to replace yours, and I will send the ten back to the Blackfeet." Here was evidence of Christian teaching, and even the Blackfeet wondered at such conduct on the part of these Indians who had been their life-long enemies.

And now Christmas was upon us, and we took dinner with Mrs. McDougall and our children, and in the afternoon my brother and self started for Edmonton. We had not heard from there since leaving, and we felt sure that Edmonton had not heard anything about us, and no doubt there was considerable anxiety as to our enterprise. The Chairman had said, "Report as soon as you can." And now we were en route for the North to report in person, also to attend an informal district meeting. Good-bye to the little colony in the fort at the foot of the great mountains. Good-bye to wife and children, and we were off. This time we travelled by a new route through the hills. Old buffalo trails were our bridle paths, and through spots and scenes wonderfully picturesque and intensely suggestive these instinctive engineers of nature led us on.

## CHAPTER XII.

Camp in pine forest—Leave Chinook range—Relax our vigilance  
—New Year's Eve—With friends at Edmonton—Cold intense.

We camped the first night in a pine forest, but so near the great plains that the influence of these had brought the rich grasses they produce in amongst the trees. Here we had shelter and food, and felt comparative safety. Nevertheless, we watched in turn, "trusted in Providence, and kept our powder dry." This had been the principle of our action and service, and we were keeping this up to the measure of our strength and ability. With the approaching dawn, we were away, for with horses in the winter, where there is no settlement, you are handicapped. When travelling with dogs, we would have started many hours before daylight. As we went north the snow deepened, and we took turns breaking a trail. Now and then a few bulls had broken the crust for a little way, but we struck straight as we could, and the unbroken snow was before us most of the time.

When night came we were on the edge of a wide bay of prairie, and as it was Saturday night we took extra care to camp where we could not be seen, unless by someone near at hand. The smoke of a campfire is hard to manage; but if you use quick, dry wood there is not nearly so much smoke

cloud made. Here we spent the Sabbath. Many good men have criticized our course in these early years in thus spending the Sabbath in absolute isolation.

"Far better," said they, "to be moving on and making progress in your journey."

However, notwithstanding the charge of "Legalism," and "Pharisaism," and "Fanaticism," we religiously kept the Sabbath, counting this from 12 p.m. Saturday night until 12 p.m. Sunday night. We did so now, David, the trader and guide and natural-born traveller and instinctive pioneer, giving way in this, as in many other matters, to his missionary brother.

We kept up the fire. We read and talked. We watched our horses and camp. We dreamed of the inevitable changes we saw coming. "When would these come?" was the perplexing thought. This great country must become peopled, but as yet humanity was afar in the distance. Railroads must be built, and all Canada was sparsely settled. The far East had but a few people. Who will come and occupy this immense fertile region? These were the thoughts which, when we had time, floated through our minds; and here, at the moment, there were but two of us, and the primeval all around.

Monday morning we were away early, and made straight across the plain, snow growing deeper as we were working out of the Chinook range. During the morning we discovered a war party of Blackfeet, and when they saw that we knew of their

presence they came straight for us. We picked a knoll which gently sloped on every side, and awaited their approach. They were in the strong majority as to numbers, but David and I were well armed and felt strong in the righteousness of our cause. As the warriors came near we saw they were well equipped for horse stealing. Their belts were full of lines and quirts and moccasins. I offered my hand to the leader, but he was in a quandary, as his ready-cocked gun was in his right hand. I then gently bantered him as to his suspicions and badness of heart. I said that though we were but two we were not afraid. All men were our friends; and thus I let loose all the Blackfoot I was in possession of. He asked me if my name was "John," and when I told him it was, he smiled and spoke to his following, and they nodded assent, and went on their way; and we took our steady course north, and went far before we stopped for lunch.

Away in the south we saw the smoke of many lodges, and felt we were safer at the distance. On we went as fast as we could for the balance of the day, and camping in a secure spot, as good as we could find, we stood guard in turns over our camp and horses. It was a very cold night, and long and trying to us both. With the early dawn we were away, and all day we travelled through the untrodden snow, and camped that night near the present town of Blackfalls, and concluded that we might relax our vigilance and rest and sleep. The further north we went the more the snow deepened.

We were following no trail, but going as straight as we could towards our destination. We had hoped to reach Edmonton for New Year's, but now saw this was impossible. The snow was too deep, the weather too cold, and breaking the trail at every step made our progress slow. We travelled through storm and heavy drift, and often for miles breaking the way on foot, taking this in turn. Thus we struggled on, and were thankful when, late New Year's evening, we came out on to a faint trail which was coming north from the Buffalo Lake country.

The weather was now very cold. We camped in a bluff and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. Then we were away early the next morning, and it took us until 8 p.m. that night to reach the mission on the hill at Edmonton. We had come from the mountains, and, as the crow flies, about 225 miles, and, with the exception of the war party, had not seen a human being. Truly, this was the great lone land. We had passed the fort at Edmonton, and not even a dog barked; we had crossed the flat and climbed the big hill, and were as a resurrection to our friends at the Mission house. Father, mother, sisters, David's wife and little ones—what a welcome we got! All day the north wind had been dead against us. I had not looked after my ears as I should have done, and now one of them was like a huge bladder on the side of my head. But what mattered the cold and storm and hardship, such as ninety-five per cent. of present-day

Canadians know nothing of? What mattered all this? We were welcomed as those of whose return there had been great uncertainty, and we felt what it is to accomplish.

Our report was hailed with delight by all the Edmonton population. "It is the opening up of a new country." Only the very few pessimists said, "Can you keep what you have got? Wait until spring, when the large war parties begin to move."

I suppose this sort of humanity is needed; but I confess I do not see their need in a new country. Optimism, large and free and full, is in its right place on the vanguard of every enterprise and in the opening up of all new territories.

The few days we could afford to spend with our friends at Edmonton passed quickly, and soon we were ready for our return trip. In the meantime, winter had intensified, and the snow had deepened; so we were careful in preparation. My brother was to take his wife and child back with us. We bought and loaded some flat sleds, and I bought a pair of snowshoes, and we started, with a little grain for our horses. As we were leaving late in the day we tied on a bundle or two of hay for our first night out. The country for the first forty miles out from Edmonton, because of its flatness and scrub, was the hardest part of the whole journey for horses to obtain grass from when the snow was deep. Beyond this one could strike a hill, or a range of hills, where horses, with a little pawing, could reach the grass. When we pulled into

camp in the 40-below temperature that evening, we first unharnessed our horses, and at once I took my axe to cut firewood. When I had begun I heard the sharp, peculiar sounding of, "John, come!" Bounding through the snow, I rushed to my brother, who had his little daughter in his arms, declaring she was dead, the strong fatherhood ringing out in the anguish of his tones. Sure enough, it seemed that my little niece was almost suffocated in the overmuch wrapping and careful stowing away of the child in the carry-all at her mother's feet. We did what we could, and gratefully watched the little darling begin to breathe; but we all got a shock, and all the rest of the long journey we took very good care not to run any more such risk. This was my sister-in-law's first winter trip of any length, and to the uninitiated, in such weather as we had then, it was a great change. All out-of-doors, huge walls of snow immediately around you on three sides, and on the fourth a great fire; frost, big and mighty, in strong evidence; thawing on one side and freezing on the other. No languor in such an atmosphere. We live to live in a northern winter camp. In this case both mother and daughter took to this environment splendidly.



## CHAPTER XIII.

Bear's Hill—Breaking trails—On short rations—Begin slow march to mountains—Misery delights in company—Spend night in Indian lodge.

We spent our first Sunday at the point of Bear's Hill. We were breaking trail at every step. I had one flat sled, and I put my little bay into it and let him follow me, while I went ahead on snowshoes. For miles during every drive I gave the party the benefit of three trappings of my snowshoes. Going on, I picked the trail, making this as straight as possible, and when miles ahead, would retrace my steps until I met the first sled, and, turning, would again tramp snow, and when it was time I prepared our lunch or night camp, so far as I could, before the rest came up. Under these circumstances, the journey was long and the work hard.

Sunday was a welcome change and rest for both men and horses.—I say change, for you must make things a little more comfortable for two nights and a day than you would for just part of one night. Then the enormous amount of wood you must cut and carry in to keep up the big campfire. Lazy people could never pioneer. They would die in a short time.

Here we were, a little party of five souls (for David had brought an Indian from Edmonton to

help drive his sleds), in the sublimest sort of isolation from our fellow-men, fifty miles of deep snow to Edmonton, and one hundred and seventy-five miles to the little fort in the foothills. No trail to anywhere, for the wind had speedily filled up the faint one we made yesterday; and yet, we read and sang and laughed and joked and ate and drank and were happy. It was a long, hard week from the point of Bear's Hill to the centre of a bluff of timber near where the town of Bowden is now situated. In this bluff we were forced to take shelter about noon of Saturday because of a wild storm of wind and snow, during the strength of which you could not see ten feet ahead, and all trace of track, though just made, was gone immediately.

Since the middle of the week we were on short commons, and now all our food was gone. I had a few pounds of mashed potatoes which mother was sending to my wife and children; but of these I said not a word, considering that they were sacred for the purpose for which sent, and now this heavy storm was driving us to shelter. If it would only let up, so that we might hunt, to find, if possible, some food. And so it proved, for about the middle of the afternoon the clouds lifted and the clear, crisp cold came down, and David set rabbit snares, and I put on the snowshoes and tramped out to the last point of timber, hoping to find a buffalo or some prairie chicken. Though I went far and looked sharp, I did not flush one bird, nor yet see the fresh track of any animal.

Away out on a mound commanding a vast stretch I stood and watched the sun go behind the great mountains, and felt, under the circumstances, like parodying and saying, "Not a chick to be seen, not a cow to be found, as I look about over this desolate ground."

And then drawing a long sigh, which came almost unconsciously, I turned my face campward. One likes to make a kill to replenish the larder and afford a change when travelling, but now it was a case of starvation, and we had the mother and child, and even one chicken would have made me to rejoice and be glad. However, there were none, and in gloom of heart, and stomach, as also of night, I tramped towards our transient home. David and his man had gathered a huge pile of wood, for if we must starve, at any rate, while we could, we would keep warm. David had also visited his snares, but as yet not a rabbit had gone into them.

The long, cold January night settled down around us, but we kept the big fire blazing cheerfully, and were full of optimism if not of food.

My brother and wife were of the true pioneering breed. "Theirs not to whine and cry." Little Baby Georgie laughed and played herself to sleep. Mr. Jim, the Indian, was sparkling with repartee and wit.

To-morrow was the Sabbath, and before we laid us down to sleep we had settled that if David caught any rabbits in his snares we would not travel on the Lord's Day. With dawn, the big

fire was again burning strongly, and David went to look at his snares, and we watched for his coming. Sure enough, he had two fine big rabbits, and as we had no compunctions as to eating things strangled, we settled down to the rations of two rabbits for a party of five. Many a time we men had picked the bones of two rabbits each of an evening around the campfire; but now it would be one-fifth of two for the next long hours. We boiled one for the first half of the day, and drank the broth, and did likewise for the second half of the day, and in the evening David again visited his snares, but there were no rabbits caught. We burnt up a big lot of wood during those cold Sabbath hours, but our horses had only to paw and eat, as against pawing and pulling and wading and struggling through the deep snow and deeper drifts of the other days. Thus they rested. So did we, for change is rest. During the evening David surprised us by digging up out of one of his sleds a small can of golden syrup. This made Georgie clap her hands and everybody smile, for it meant taffy. He soon had the syrup in the frying pan, and we each enjoyed our share of the rich taffy which he made. It was not much, but it cheered us up and helped fill the aching void. For this was the fourth day of less than small rations and hard travel and very cold weather.

Monday morning David lifted his snares without any rabbits, and we began our slow march south to the mountains. We nooned and let the horses paw

and eat for a short while, and then struck out across a wide plain. Here the horses and sleds came slowly. There were so many drifts to break through, and I went on far ahead and came back, and turned again and went far ahead; and now, as the sun went down and we were aiming for the last point of timber on our course, I thought I saw a faint smoke cloud rest upon it. I then eagerly pressed on to reconnoitre before it got too dark. Going nearer, I saw that this was quite a large camp, and presently I was very glad to make them out as Stoneys. Then I went in, and found they were, like ourselves, out of provisions, but that buffalo were seen yesterday, and the hunters of the camp were out since early this morning and might be in at any moment. I told them we would come on and lodge with them for the night. The chief's wife said her lodge would be ready for us, and I set out to retrace my steps and meet my party. I went a long way, and cheered them up with tidings of friends and the prospect of buffalo.

It was late when we came into the camp and were settled at last in the chief's lodge. This was my sister's first experience of the kind, to pass the night in an Indian lodge. "Oh, how awful!" But to us, who had done so very many times, and with grateful hearts shared in the hospitality of these Indians, it was a pleasant change from the real out-of-door camp, and saved us a lot of hard work.

However, though it was late, there were as yet no tidings of the hunters, and we, in common with

several hundred men and women and children, talked and exchanged news and looked into the fire and tried to forget that we had stomachs.

Presently there came to the ear the neighing of horses, and the barking of dogs; and here were the hunters; and in a few minutes my friend Jacob entered his tent and greeted us with a glad welcome. A small piece of meat was also handed in, and we were told that was all. Our hostess very soon had this small piece of meat cut up into many smaller pieces, and the whole into the kettle and on the boil in short order, and in double-quick time each one of the visitors and family shared in this light repast. If there is any truth in the old saw, "Misery delights in company," then it was amply fulfilled that night, for in every lodge in the camp we were guests in, a multitude was in the same box with us. However, the news the chief brought was cheering. Buffalo were going into the mountains between us and our destination; so we might starve and sleep now and hope much for to-morrow. Jacob said he would move his camp in the morning in our direction, and it was arranged that we travel together for the day, and look for food before or at our next camp. He said they had killed but one buffalo that day. The ground was rough and the snow deep, and only one horse in the party caught up to the herd, and his rider was able to kill only one animal, a little portion of which we had supped on. My saddle horse had carried my saddle and brought up the rear in our company all the way from Edmonton, so I told David that as he

would have the Indian camp with him for the day I would take my horse and go ahead and look for buffalo. With this understanding we stretched our feet to the fire and slept.

As there was no breakfast to prepare, the whole camp was soon on the march the next morning. In company with a half a dozen Indians, I left on the hunt about daylight. Some time before noon we sighted a band of bulls, and rode as near as we could before starting them; but now they were off, and we raced after them. My mount was a little white fellow, "Wah-be" by name, and he went at his work in grand style. The trip to Edmonton and the privilege of merely carrying the saddle and having the full benefit of our trail as we made it, as also to stop and paw and nip as he chose for all these days coming up, had trained him right down to fitness. My, my, what a race through the snow and drifts until we were dead on the trail of the flying herd! Soon Wa-be and his rider were ahead of the rest; indeed, had so distanced them they did not kill out of this bunch. Now we were in the thick snow cloud which came from the heels of these ponderous brutes as they raced for life, and, wiping the snow from my face and eyes after I had emerged from the cloud, I looked them over and saw two splendid animals at the head of the bunch. Speaking to Wa-be, I pushed him after them along the top of a ridge.

We fairly flew through the snow, and as I felt my noble little horse under me I thought, barring accidents, I will kill those two fine fellows. And

now came my chance, and I shot the first one, and he swerved and fell, and I heard the exultant cry of the Indians as they saw him drop. But now we were on the slope of the hill, and, like a cannon ball, down its side went the herd. But Wa-be hung to them, and my heart was up in my breast with the thought, "If you fall, my fine horse, where will you and I land?"

But, no, sir; down we went, and immediately at the foot I got my next chance, and fired, and this time my shot was more fatal than the last, for over went the monster and slid along on his side in the deep snow for some yards, so strong was the impetus of the race. Wa-be and I flew past our game, but speedily held up, both quite satisfied with our good fortune. Riding back up the hill, already there were a half a dozen of my Indian friends around the first bull, and soon plenty of wood and willows were gathered. They fixed a seat for me, unsaddled my horse, rubbed him down, and in their own language lauding both the horse and his rider. Soon a small party of both footmen and horsemen were around each bull, and in an incredibly short time many roasts were on the *a-boun-askes*, or roasting sticks, around the fire. With long willow forks the rich and delicate and nicely broiled parts were passed to me. Away in the eastern distance we could see the moving camp taking its course; but already, from our fire smoke on the hill and below, they would know we had made a kill. As the day went by several more were killed, so that the whole camp had plenty. It is now, as I write, the



beginning of 1910, and that horse and race and hunger and feast were in conjunction in the beginning of 1874; but the whole scene is as fresh as if it had occurred this morning. Wa-be, the hero of that cold winter's morning, and Jacob, my noble friend, and many other splendid fellows have gone on; and if it is, as the Blackfoot believes, that the good horse, as also the good man, will be together again in "the Happy Hunting Grounds," well, then —. At any rate, the joy and thrill of that race is with me still.

Again we spend the night in the Indian lodge; but how different. Several thousands of pounds of fine meat have been brought in, and stomachs are full and hearts very grateful. Those who always have been around the corner from a provision and grocery store, or have never lived away from the rattle of the delivery wagon, who have always with the day had their three or more meals therein, it would be impossible for them to appreciate the effect of food on humanity. Only the hunter and nomad can truly know this.

Early the next morning we held a service in the open. The thermometer was away down, and common sense said, "Be brief," and we were. Then we parted with our Stoney friends and pursued our journey straight for the Bow River Valley, which, as we approached it, had less snow, and allowed me to doff my snowshoes, and we travelled faster, and thus we reached home and friends the evening of the second day from the Indian camp.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Reach our fort—Magnificent buffalo hunt—Narrow escape for my life—Saved by a log—Stamping out whiskey trade—Urge Hudson's Bay Co. to extend operations.

It was sublime joy to find all well in our fort. The nearer we approached it the more anxious did we always become. This time all was well, and we were profoundly thankful. Number one Mrs. McDougall was overjoyed to welcome Number two Mrs. McDougall. These two white women were the only specimens of the kind in an immense area, say some six hundred miles by one thousand miles in extent. Noble, plucky, brave, heroic daughters of this race, and wives and companions to their husbands, as also mothers to their children they have proved themselves to be, and there is not much more than this within the gift of Providence for any woman to boast herself of. My men had done well in looking after our stock and in taking out timber and manufacturing lumber with the whip-saw, for of course we hoped in due time to move down into the valley and erect permanent buildings. However, our larder, which was pretty full when we went away, was now nearly empty; indeed, Mrs. McDougall had determined, if we did not turn up soon, to send Donald after meat. But we had come, and very soon we had fresh horses in and a

party organized, and once more were off to hunt up the buffalo. The third day out we struck them early in the day, and in a little while the hunters among us were scattered after them. Fresh snow had fallen for quite a depth, making running somewhat difficult for both buffalo and horses.

I killed two good cows, and, straightening them for skinning, rode over to my men and told one of them to make ready two sleds that we might go and butcher my kill and bring them in. While he was harnessing the horses I caught up my little horse Solomon. The reader will remember that I had bought this cayuse from a Jew in Benton. This was the first time Solomon was to be ridden since I bought him. His back had been galled, and I positively forbade anyone using him until this was healed. For this trip I had brought him along as a saddle pony, wherewith to spare my runners. I now threw the saddle on Solomon, and, my man being ready, I rode off ahead straight to where my two cows were lying.

We had not gone a half a mile from the start, and were still in full view of camp when over the hill there came a nice little herd of cows and young buffalo. Ah, thought I, what a shame I am not on one of the runners. My, what a chance to miss!

Thus I was lamenting, when I perceived a marvellous change come over Solomon. He gathered himself under me, and tossed his head and snorted like a warhorse. His little ears moved back and forward, and many things in his action seemed to

say, "What are you lamenting about? Just try me." So I did try him, and away we went through the loose snow at a splendid pace.

And now, as we approached the flying herd, I saw a bunch at its head which made my mouth water. There, all gathered together, and running as one, were six magnificent fat cows; and again I wished for one of my runners; and again Solomon seemed to answer back, "We are here. Don't you worry."

Straight right into the herd we dashed, and very soon we were through the snow cloud, and my little Jew horse was surprising me at every jump. Now we split the herd; now we were making for the six cows at the head of the run, and Solomon acted as if he knew good meat as well as I did, and, putting those sharp ears back, he made straight for the game. I now began to feel confidence in my mount, so I dropped the reins and got ready to do my part.

Presently we were near enough for the first shot, and I took the best in my judgment, and down she dropped. In went another cartridge, and Solomon was there, and down went the second cow; and thus it continued until the six fat animals were stretched in their snow beds, which they made with the impetus of the run. Shouts of admiration came from the men at the sleds and from my own man. "Hurrah for Solomon!" And now we had eight instead of two cows to skin and cut up and haul in to camp. This kept my portion of our little party

busy late on into the night, but that day's hunt went a good way towards loading us with meat. And Solomon, why, he went right up in value within an hour of the fine race we had made. I was offered two much larger horses for him, but just then I could not let him go. He had won my admiration with his splendid quality.

It was on this trip that my brother killed two buffalo at one shot. Up to this time to do this was most unusual, but now we were coming into stronger-shooting guns. When we were fully loaded and on the home stretch I left the party and rode on to the fort. All this time, when away from home, we were most anxious as to what might happen there. The country was so large, the people absolutely without law, and terrible possibilities would come flashing into one's thoughts, and when we could, either David or myself would fly for home. This time I again found all well. Our heavily loaded sleds did not come in until three days later.

In the meantime, I had one of the many narrow escapes with my life which, all through the years, have been frequent in my frontier experience. I determined to build a temporary church, and place it just outside of our fort; for, as I now saw, it would be impossible to move out into more open country for another year or two. So I took my axe and climbed the hill, and began to cut down and measure off good-sized dry spruce, which would give me a building about 20x30 inside. I was alone

and making good progress, when my tree, in falling, dislodged another I had not noticed, which was leaning towards me. This tree began to fall first. I, watching the other, did not see it at once. Then when I did, it was coming so fast I could not move out of the way. Had it not been for a log which lay across its path I suppose I would have been killed right there. As it was, it knocked me flat and helpless for a time, and when I came to and saw how near death I had been I felt a strange shock run through my whole system. The dead log had saved me from being crushed to a jelly. I did not cut any more logs that day, and was very thankful to be able to go to work the next morning.

When my men came in, and the meat was put away in our storehouse, the first thing we did was to haul out these logs and build this temporary church, and thus have a place of gathering for ourselves and the wandering people who came to us from time to time. Having finished the church, we went on taking out timber, and kept the whipsaw going, making lumber for future use. While we were thus occupied during the first months of 1874, south of us and within one day's journey from our fort several whiskey mills were vigorously at work, demoralizing and decimating the plains tribes, and this continued right through to the boundary line. Scores of thousands of buffalo robes and hundreds of thousands of wolf and fox skins and most of the best horses the Indians had were taken south into Montana, and the chief

article of barter for these was alcohol. In this traffic very many Indians were killed, and also quite a number of white men. Within a few miles of us, that winter of 1873-4, forty-two able-bodied men were the victims among themselves, all slain in the drunken rows. These were Blackfeet. Just a little south of us the Spanish cook I mentioned earlier in the book was killed by Dutch Fred, who also was my loud friend. There was no law but might. Some terrible scenes occurred when whole camps went on the spree, as was frequently the case, shooting, stabbing, killing, freezing, dying.

Thus these atrocious debauches were continuing all that winter not far from us. Mothers lost their children. These were either frozen to death or devoured by the myriad dogs of the camp. The birth-rate decreased and the poor red man was in a fair way towards extinction, just because some men, coming out of Christian countries, and themselves the evolution of Christian civilization, were now ruled by lust and greed. Canada's fair name was at this time in this section of the country in jeopardy.

We were making reports and representing conditions to our Government, and were constantly looking for some action, and trusting it would come soon. In the meantime, we were doing what we could to draw off the trade from these whiskey men. My brother had quite an outfit, and I made several reports to the Hudson's Bay Co., hoping that they would extend their operations and estab-

lish once more out in this southern country. Our Stoneys, in the face of this sore temptation, were doing splendidly, and keeping themselves like men. It was marvelous how these neophyte Christians withstood the blandishments of the whiskey men. Their noble conduct was a very great encouragement to us; even the wild portion kept away from the firewater, and were in this strong stand a constant wonder to the plains tribes.



## CHAPTER XV.

Hear from Edmonton—Prepare for long trip—Again rolling south.

In March we heard from Edmonton. My brother had gone south to the Conrad establishment, on Sheep Creek. This was the only post that did not traffic in whiskey; but, alongside of this, were several of the other sort. Here we learned that a party of white men had gone south, and that they had left one of their number in an Indian camp north of the Bow, and that this man was used up with snow-blindness, and also because of the hardship of the trip. Moreover, David learned that this man's destination was our fort, and that he had letters for our company.

The next day after I heard this I set out to look up this lone white man and these letters and tidings from headquarters and loved ones. I was very fortunate in my quest, for I had not gone more than about twelve or fifteen miles when I saw two men and one horse in the distance coming towards me. Here was the stranger, a huge man, seated on top of his belongings, which, in turn, were packed on the back of a small white pony. The owner of the horse, a Blackfoot Indian, was trudging behind, driving his horse ahead of him. I think there was joy in that white man's heart when he

beheld my face, or rather when he heard my voice. He was sick and sore and almost blind; a great big man, but not of the kind to stand the hardships of a severe winter trip in this country.

My experience has made it plain to me that only men of certain builds and temperaments can stand the roughing of frontier life. A giant on the street and in the railway car, or on the farm, may be a fearful burden to his party during a frontier winter trip. If I was going to find the North Pole, I would be very careful in the selection of the men of my party. This man, if you put him on the back of a good horse, or gave him a seat in a stage coach or railway car, was a good traveller and a fine fellow; but let the horse play out, or the stage break down, or the train stop, then he was done. The true pioneer is the man who goes on, no matter what happens.

I very soon had the stranger friend up on the back of my strong horse, and as I ran and jogged beside him, I got the news of the North country and heard about my people at Edmonton. I also learned his history. A fellow-Canadian, he had gone to the Pacific Coast by the southern route; had been in the mines of British Columbia; had come over the mountains by the Yellowhead Pass to Edmonton; had got acquainted with father, and thought the world of him; had letters with him, and money, for me; had joined this party which was going to Fort Benton, but played out and was left in the Indian camp. He had come in contact, as he

thought, with a famous Catholic priest, one of the most liberal-minded and large-hearted he had ever come across; had left his horse and saddle and some of his stuff with the priest to be sent in later. And now I was anxious as to who this worthy and large-hearted priest might be. I had not heard of any such person. I knew of a noted renegade who sometimes posed as a priest, and among the Black-feet had given himself the name of "The Trinity," "Na-oks-ka-ta-pe." A man who, while educated and at times most intelligent, was at other times very eccentric, and because of this type of semi-insanity, the Indians suffered him and lodged him and let him live. They had no respect for the man, called him "The Forked Tongue," and when describing a noted liar said he was just the same as "No-oks-ka-ta-pe."

I enquired of Spencer, my new friend, the name of this priest. I mentioned the names of several I knew. No; none of these.

Then I mentioned the name of the eccentric.

"Yes; oh, yes; that is it; it was the Rev. Father LaRue."

Then I laughed and told him that LaRue was not a priest; that he was called sometimes "the bogus priest," and it was both humorous and pathetic to see Spencer when all this dawned upon him.

He lifted his hands and ejaculated, "Suffering humanity!" This was a new expression to me, but I thought it very appropriate. "Suffering

humanity," the victims forever of cunning and rascally humanity. This was another, but not an isolated case by any means.

Then, as we journeyed up the valley, Spencer on my horse, and I tramping mother earth, he told me how LaRue had affected the great missionary; how he had travelled, in the course of his wonderful work, in Africa and in South America, and how he had with him in the Indian lodge copies of the *Christian Guardian* and *Methodist Magazine*, and other Protestant publications. (I knew this, for I had sent LaRue, on his own request, a bundle of reading matter such as I could pick up.) Therefore, Spencer had thought him the big, broad-minded priest. It was humorous to listen to Spencer, for, as all this deception dawned upon him, he would every little while utter this new phrase to me, "Suffering humanity," and I could very well understand the accentuation, which was now most ominous for poor LaRue if Spencer ever got his hands upon him.

Our letters and instructions were most satisfactory, and we began making preparations for the annual trip for supplies. This time ours was to Fort Benton; and while this was only half the distance to Fort Garry, it was very much more dangerous. Then there was the care of the people left at home. On this score we had to depend in large measure on the Stoneys. They became our home guard. Especially was this true of Jacob and his following. It was a very great blessing to

have some of these warriors and scouts, with the training of the centuries, on our side, and a grand, noble man like Jacob to stand by you whatever came. The two Mrs. McDougalls had all faith in Jacob and his people. It meant something to prepare for one of these long trips. Carts, wagons, harness, provisions, all to be got ready; men to outfit; stock to look up; winter's trade to pack; ammunition, guns, tents, kitchen outfits, for several different messes; necessary tools for mending carts and putting in new axles, etc. Very far different all this from stepping over to the freight shed offices and paying your bill.

However, by the 6th of April, 1874, we had made all necessary preparations and said good-bye, and were again rolling south. This time we desired to pick and make as good and straight a trail as we could find from our fort to the upper end of the wooded bluff on High River. There had been wandering through the Saskatchewan and in this part of the country a native mixed-blood, partly French, mostly Cree, Elixie by name, or, as he was called by the Indians, "A-gin-a-wa-we-tum," which, translated, "Passes All, Making a Noise as He Goes." This man was religiously crazy. At times he was an ordinary priest, self-ordained and set apart specially; at other times he was the Pope himself; and sometimes he told the people that he was greater than the Pope of Rome. "When he could, he dressed as a priest. He was a good hunter, and followed the buffalo out into this south-

ern country, and had built a shanty up on the Elbow, some thirty miles south of our fort. Sometimes he lived in this shack, but generally was wandering alone. So far as I knew, Elixie was a good-hearted eccentric. During this winter an Irish Roman Catholic priest had come out from Edmonton, with a lay brother, and these were living in Elixie's shack on the Elbow River. LaRue, the bogus priest, had given Spencer an order on this mission, as he called it, for Spencer's horse and saddle and belongings left in camp, and which LaRue had promised to send in to this place.

Our line of travel passed some miles to the east of where the priest was living, and I took LaRue's order and rode over to hunt up this mission. In due time, I saw the lone building, and at first thought it must be abandoned. The snow was deep all around, and no trails either in or out; but, as I approached nearer, I saw one person, and soon made him out to be the Irish priest, Father Scollin. He was entirely alone. There had not been anyone else about for months, and, their provisions running short, the lay brother had gone out to look for the camps. The Rev. Mr. Scollin was overjoyed to have me call. When I told him my business, and showed him the order given to Spencer by LaRue, he said as he read it, "The scoundrel," referring to LaRue and to the order. The answer was truly typical. "Barring your

presence, I wouldn't give a spit for it. There is no horse here, nor anything else from LaRue."

Of course, I had expected this, but making sure would settle Spencer's mind for the present. Mr. Scollin insisted on brewing a cup of tea, and we sat and chatted for a little, and I rode away, leaving him to his loneliness. Some men can stand being alone, but this one I had just left would soon go off his balance under such conditions. Then there would have been three of a kind afloat in this new country.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Cross the Elbow—What is good for John is good for you—  
Cross High River—Meet genuine son of Erin—Strike for  
upper trail along the mountains—Arrive at Piegan  
agency.

Crossing the Elbow, and making our trail as straight as we could with our, as yet, limited knowledge of the country, we met some of our mountain Stoneys travelling northward. Chief Cheneka was with them.

He said he wanted to ask me some questions. "Had I been in the South country, on Sheep Creek or on High River, this winter?"

I answered "No"; that all my travel until now, since I had seen him last November, had been north of the Bow River.

Then the old man's face brightened up, and, turning to his party, which had gathered up beside us on the hill, he said, "It is false. John has not been south to these trading posts. Those were lies that the white men told us."

Then the chief explained that some of his young men had gone in to trade ammunition and tobacco, and the white men had offered them firewater, but the young fellows refused it. Then the white men asked their reason for thus refusing this good stuff, and they had answered, "Our missionary,



John, told us not to touch it, and we like him and want to listen to what he says."

Then the white men laughed, and said, "That is the way with John; he likes it, and drinks it himself, but he does not want you to have it. He is afraid of you if you drank too much. Why, he was here this winter, and got wild drunk himself, and we had to put him to bed. What is good for John should be good for you."

The chief said this somewhat staggered the young men; but they concluded to not take any at that time, and wait until they saw me, and make sure. The chief said he told them he thought it was a lie; but now he was pleased to have me tell him it was false, and to know I had not been to these trading posts.

I was much encouraged to come across this confidence in my people, and also to find such staying power of will among these wild young fellows in the Stoney camp. I was also much incensed at those whiskey traders; but what could you expect? The traffic makes the men, or rather, unmakes them.

Besides Spencer, we had with us the two Englishmen who had wintered with us on the Bow. A sorry lot were these two men. For months they had lived in the same room and had not spoken to each other. They had the one chimney, but would not use it at the same time; had come to blows before the Indians, and I had to threaten to most unmercifully thrash both of them if they did not keep from disgracing us before the natives. Now they were

going south with us. One had his own cart and horse; the other was dead broke, and my brother and self were freighting and feeding the useless fellow out of the country.

When we started we placed him in our own mess, but he was so filthy we sent him to the cart drivers, our native boys and men, and in a few days a deputation of these waited on us to ask that this white man be banished from their mess — "He is so dirty and so lousy," this was their complaint. So we were forced to put this white man to cook and eat alone for the rest of the journey south. Both David and I were sorry and ashamed to do with this man as he compelled us to do by his conduct.

After crossing High River we came in contact with another type of a white man, a genuine son of Erin. He came into our camp with his rifle in his hand and big revolver hanging to his belt. "Be yees travelling into Montana? Could yees take me along wid you? I came this far wid some frogaters. They shook me here, bejabers. I had enough of them meself." We made it clear to our friend that we were a strictly temperance party, and if he stood by us on this ground, and also would take his turn on guard, he might come along, all of which he gladly consented to, and proved himself a real good fellow. One day, in a burst of confidence, he told me of his strict upbringing in the Holy Catholic faith, and that he accepted it all, purgatory and everything else, bejabers. He assured me, however, that he had already passed through purgatory. I

interjected that I thought that this was subsequent to death, and he was now beside me very much alive.

But no, said my new theological instructor, "Youse can go through here, and now I have already sure."

I said, "In what way have you passed through purgatory?"

"Why," said he, "did I not spend the winter in Edmonton, and there was neither bread nor whiskey; and the Lord Himself would not be after asking any poor sinner to do more than that."

I did not dispute my friend's opinion, but thought that if he was right, then I had also gone through purgatory.

We crossed the Willow Creek and Old Man's River, near where Macleod is now situated, and then, instead of going by Whoopup, we struck for what became the upper trail along the mountains. This, by scouting on far ahead, and then signalling back, we shortened up considerably. Here we were able, in one short drive, to cross the Great Divide between Hudson's Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. We slept beside the waters of the Northern ocean, and in the early morning drive had gone over the ridge and breakfasted by the waters of the Southern sea.

Ever and anon we killed buffalo for food. It was up on this summit land that I had to alight from my horse and drive him before me in order to keep him from kicking the buffalo calves which were following us into camp. If we had been wise in

our generation we should now have a large buffalo ranch, but to keep the pot boiling and one's scalp on one's head kept us pretty busy at this time. So we let this opportunity, as many others, go by without using it.

As an evidence of the grass and climate, let me say that we had left Edmonton in the North in November of the fall, and our oxen pulled in carts all the way out to where we built our fort. Then we worked them off and on hauling timber and firewood all winter; and now we had left on this trip on the 6th of April, and here we are, two hundred miles or more on our way south, and these same oxen working in carts every day but Sunday, and we making from twenty-five to thirty miles a day through new country, sometimes without trails, which is always harder on stock, and our cattle in good fix, and all this time without a bite of anything other than the natural grasses of Alberta and Montana. We had had some spring storms, but the general run of weather had been most favorable. Such sunrises and sunsets as we had seen on this trip were indescribably glorious. Old Sol and his various constituencies seem to know how to make the most of the great settings the foothills and the mountains give them. We repeatedly saw the heavens and earth meet in one gorgeous scene of emblazoned glory.

Some mornings as we travelled were as an all-day benediction of God's grace and goodness to

man and beast, and the sunsets were to us as the vesper hymn of this universe.

On, south into Montana, at this time a great wild region, as yet unpeopled, but already known as a wonderful mineral and pastoral land. Presently its agricultural qualities would be brought out, and this big, unoccupied space would teem with humanity. It was the United States then taking in the population; but soon it would be our turn, and then we would have the benefit of their experience.

After crossing several tributaries of the great Missouri, and climbing and again descending the fine tablelands between these paralleling streams, on the Teton we found the Piegan agency. Here, in looking about, we came to the conclusion that it was no wonder that Uncle Sam was constantly having trouble with his native wards. The Government and the Indians were, both of them, looked upon by the ordinary Government employee as legitimate prey.

## CHAPTER XVII.

At Fort Shaw—Life in Montana—Treatment of Indians—In  
Whoopup country— Meet strange character.

In due time we were out on the Sun River, and at Fort Shaw, the frontier military depot of Northern Montana. Here our native boys and men first saw military drill and dress, and heard bands discoursing sweet and stirring music. Their eyes and minds expressed wonder and great astonishment. We had thought of going on to Helena to exchange our pelts and make our purchases, but found that it would be more to our interest to turn down to Fort Benton, where, in due time, we went into camp and began our trade and barter. Here we put in a very busy week. I was the only one of our party who had ever seen Benton, and that but once, for a day and two nights last autumn. Then it was in a storm, and we did not see much of this wild west show. Here was a small adobe fort, with a company of regulars of the cavalry of the American army. Here were saloons and gambling dens galore, and out of all proportion to the size of the place. These served the floating population of bull-whackers and mule-punchers and the smugglers and wolfers and promiscuous Indian fighters, for it would seem that this was the chief occupation of the general public in and around Fort Benton at

this time. The white man could do anything he chose to do—kill and steal and drink and gamble and enter into all kinds of debauchery. He could load himself down with arms, pistols, knives, rifles, etc., and swagger in and out of town and the United States army at these outposts would look on and let him do his worst; but an Indian could not avenge an insult. He could not turn upon the white man who took his wife or daughter, or defrauded him in trade, and whose conduct was generally that of abuse and constant insult to all his manhood. No, no; let an Indian but turn, and it was, "Bring out the troops; call in the settlers and wild adventurers," and "Down with the Injuns! Wipe them out, root and branch!" Of course, there were some few exceptions, even in 1874; but soon these kept their thought to themselves, and the wildest thing in this big country at this time was the ordinary white man. As to anything like religion, there seemed to be no thought of this at any one of these frontier outposts or settlements. You may be sure we of the North, unaccustomed as we were to such life and thought, did not find this climate congenial, and we made haste to make our purchases and load up our carts and wagons and turn our faces homeward.

I am sure that with everyone in our party there was a sense of relief when we pulled away from this seething scene of awful blasphemy, drunkenness and vice, and, to my mind, the worst condition was the positive unfairness of the thought of the white community.

Going back, we took the lower trail; the grass was now starting nicely, and our stock were doing well. We forded the Teton and rafted the Marias, and in due time had recrossed the 49th parallel, and were back in Canada again. This part of our country was without law, and as yet we were not beholden to any earthly government; and I am sorry to say that most of the few white men who were now in this southern portion did not even acknowledge the Divine government.

As we approached the Whoopup country, we planned to cross the Belly River below the junction of the St. Mary's, and near where now is situated the town of Lethbridge. In so doing, we would take the waters of the St. Mary's and Belly and Kootenay and Old Man's rivers in one big crossing, and it behooved us, if possible, to find some means of transport. If the Whoopup people had a boat, and would let us have it, this would be a wonderful help to us.

In order to solve this question, I rode on in advance of my party, and, fording the St. Mary's at considerable risk, found myself approaching the gate of this whiskey fortress.

I had hardly entered, and was dismounting from my horse, when I was seized by somebody, and a loud "How do, pardner?" sounded in my ear.

Turning to face this stranger, I saw at once he was well on in liquor, and his whole visage was indicative of a profound spree. He was fully armed, moreover, and, changing his rifle from right to left



hand, he linked the former into my arm and jerked me along to an open door, across the square of the fort, and, almost before I knew it, we were standing together up against the counter of the bar. This counter was made of two huge cottonwood logs, the one on top of the other, and the upper side of the topmost log faced smooth. One might pound on such a counter with tremendous emphasis, and there would not be the slightest jar. My new friend immediately called for the drinks, and, while I protested I was not dry, still he cursed me and ordered the stuff. The bartender put two tin pans, all battered and rusted, on the log, and proceeded to pour some liquor into them. I thanked my friend, and refused his drink; whereat he cursed me up and down, and presently compromised by drinking both his and my shares, which seemed for the time to put a quietus on him, for which I was thankful.

In the meanwhile I asked of the gentlemanly bartender, who, by the way, seemed to be the only sober person about the place, as to a skiff or boat, and explained our situation. Yes, they had a small skiff. If I would wait a minute he would ask the proprietor as to the loan of it. I thanked him, and away he went; and now the room was the scene of some wild shooting. One of the company had said, "Let us shoot for the drinks, boys," and bang went his pistol. Going across the room, he put the blank shell into the hole his bullet had made in the log of the wall and then the shooting began on both sides of me, and on both sides of where I

stood the bullets sang past into the wall. I confess I was glad when the barkeeper hove in sight and told me we could have the boat, for which I thanked him. Just then a big fellow sprang into the room with a long, bare knife in his hand. This he stuck into the log counter with a savage thrust, and, with terrible oaths, said the place was becoming altogether too tame. Said he, "I would like just now to be ripping up somebody." Then he saw me, and noticed I was a stranger. Certainly he was a wild-looking fellow. All the evidences of a prolonged drunk were on him. His shirt was open at the breast and sleeveless, and he looked as if the next moment he would take the delirium tremens—wild, haggard, blear-eyed and swollen-faced. Looking at me, he said, "Who are you?"

I replied. "A traveller."

He cursed me, and again asked where I belonged. I told him my home was in the North. He cursed the North and all that dwelt therein, but said I might help him to recover his horses, which he claimed had been stolen by someone in the North. I said, "Give me the description or the brands and I will do what I can to look up your horses."

He then, with most awful curses, denounced brands and descriptions, and, turning to me and brandishing his big knife, shouted, "What I want is the life of the man who stole my horses! Bring me his head, that I may kick it across this fort, and I will give you five hundred dollars in gold in your hand!"

And thus he raged; and I pressed him for color

and size and brand of horses; and now I saw my chance to get out of this foul room, and, in my turn, linked my arm into the big fellow's, and he came out with me. When we got out into the open once more I felt a great sense of relief, and also a new feeling of pluck came into my being.

"Come, now," I said, "tell me about these horses." Again he got wild, and wanted only the heads of the men to kick across the fort yard.

"Oh, pshaw," said I, "you would not kill a man for a few cayuses."

Then he got mad at me, and brandished his knife in my face, and he said he had killed men for less than that, and could do it again.

Here I interjected, "Tell me your name."

"My name," said he, "is Bill Hart, or Hardy Bill, the wildest man you ever struck."

"No, no," I answered, "Mr. Hart, you are not the wildest man I ever struck."

Then he got wild at me, and said, "Who are you to talk to me like this?" And I told him I was a humble Gospel preacher.

"What," said this poor, blear-eyed, crazed-with-drink-and-foul-associations creature, "what! Are you a preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I want to be," I answered.

Then it seemed to dawn on him. "Are you the Reverend John the boys talk about?"

"Yes," I answered.

Then he stepped back and dropped his knife, and looked all broken up, and said, "Forgive me,

Reverend John. I am sorry I acted to you as I have. You know it's the whiskey?"

"Yes," I said, "it's the whiskey."

"Why," said this big fellow, "my mother was one of those 'old Zion singers.' You know what I mean?"

"Yes, Mr. Hart, I know what that means," I answered. "And, my dear fellow, your mother's prayers will yet catch you up. Come, now, do try and be a man for mother's sake." We gripped hands on that, and just then a still bigger man rushed at me and gripped me with great joy.

This was Tom Favel, alias Queveden, alias Kin-was-quanace, or "The Tall One," as the Indians called him. He was quite a noted character, a big medicine-man, a conjurer, and was possessed of occult powers, so 'twas said. At any rate, he was a giant of a man, and just now, like all the rest, was more or less under the influence of whiskey. I had known him for some years, sometimes as a friend and sometimes otherwise. Just now he was friendly and wanted to embrace me.

"Why, John, my friend, I am so glad to see you. I want you, right here and right off, to marry my daughter to a fellow here," and I was pulled away over into a corner of the fort, where the bride and groom were. And now all the boys, including Mr. Hart, or Hardy Bill, gathered in to see the fun.

I found the groom and bride more sober than the rest, and I questioned them until I was satisfied it was all right for me to marry, as the old man

said, "Right here and right now," without license or permit.

Forsooth, there was no one to grant the license. It was something to have these people ask for Christian marriage, and this was my unexpected opportunity to hold a service in Whoopup. Soon the bare room was full of wild, strange-looking characters, and, to my joy, amongst them came my old friend, Gladstone. I called for quiet. I told every man to take his hat off. I then called the couple up before me. I then talked to this crowd as God gave me utterance, and in solemn reverence these men stood. I sang a verse or two, and as I was about to speak to the man and woman, the giant father spoke up, and, with tremendous emphasis, said, "Now, John, marry them strong, so that no man can part them. Marry them, John, right up before God. Marry them strong." I went on with the ceremony, and then sang the Doxology and dismissed our strange audience. I then shook hands all round, and for a spell we had quiet and were free from blasphemy.

My old friend, Glad, said he would bring the skiff down to where we wanted to make our crossing. I mounted my horse, and rode over the flat and again forded the St. Mary's, and was glad indeed when I was safe from its raging current, for the water was rising rapidly, and I foresaw hard work for our whole party on the big river. Gladstone brought with him a friend and the skiff, and all the days of our crossing these two men acted as a sort of bodyguard over our party. I

knew they were anxious about their own crowd, and therefore they remained with us until we had freighted our stuff over. This took us several days. The river was high, and the current like that of a millrace, and the boat small. It took a long time and very hard work to make one trip, and we had very many trips to make.

It was almost midsummer, and the days were long, but from dawn until dark we labored, and when all our freight was over then came the carts and wagons, piece by piece; and when all this was done, we had a terrible time making our stock take the river.

All this while some of our party had to be on guard over our goods and stock. When we were through we returned the boat, with thanks, and, loading up, climbed the big hill and went on our way to the next river. Our course was this time also below the junctions of the many streams which flow into the Bow from the south side. We made for a point about ten miles below the mouth of the High River. Spencer had put his money into twenty-five Texan steers, and David and I had each bought a couple of cows, with their calves, and Spencer drove these cattle behind our caravan as we journeyed. From Whoopup, as far as the Bow, we had the Favels and some other half-breeds travelling with us. Coming to the Bow River, we made a skin canoe, using three large buffalo hides, and again the strenuous labor was gone through of making a crossing. The Bow was a larger and stronger stream than the Belly.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Down the Little Bow—Fall in with Indians—Ticklish position  
—Harangue the Indians—Saved—Horse trading.

While we were busy day and night rushing things, there came on a three days' storm of cold rain and a little snow. During this Spencer's cattle and our cows got away, and when the storm cleared, while we went at the work of ferrying, Spencer and one of our boys hunted the missing cattle; but after two days' search they came back without them. I volunteered to try my hand and let Spencer take my place with the crossing. I took two boys with me, and we rode carefully up the Bow, and then up the High River to the trail going south, then along that to Mosquito Creek, where we camped for the night. Then, in the early morning, we went down this to its junction with the Little Bow. We had carefully scouted all this big circle, and had made three distinct lines of observation. We felt sure the cattle had not gone west; but now, when almost at the junction of the Mosquito and Little Bow, we came upon their tracks, and were disappointed to note that they had passed this point early in the storm, and were travelling fast and evidently making for their home range.

However, I determined to follow their tracks for a few miles, hoping that they might have stopped in some sheltered spot. We had not ridden more than ten or twelve miles on the tracks of the cattle when we saw Indians, and very soon they had seen us. While we could not tell the size of their camp, still we knew there must be a considerable number of them, for those we saw were making signals.

I stopped my party of two boys and self on the top of a hill commanding all sides, and, with a good deal of internal feeling, awaited the outcome of this meeting. Very shortly, ten times our number came dashing over the hills towards us. My boys were the children of the hereditary foes of these men now charging upon us. Moreover, we were in that part of the country where every Indian had very good reason to hate the white man. Then there was no earthly law for us to fall back upon. I can tell you, my readers, it was a solemn time for the boys and myself as we watched the swift-approaching crowd of plainsmen coming down upon us. Fortunately, the Indian who first had discovered our vicinity had come on in advance of the rest, and now he stopped across the valley, on the brow of the hill, and waited for the others; but I called across to him and told him to come over.

For a little he hesitated; then he mustered up courage, and, with his ready-cocked revolver in hand, he dashed up the hill to us, and at once recognizing me, said, "John," at which I nodded, and



we gripped hands. I remembered his face as that of one I had seen the previous summer. He now charged back across the valley to meet the oncoming crowd, and as these approached, he harangued them.

I could not make out what he said altogether, but heard my name, "John," and "our friend," and was glad to hear these words and to be introduced by the young warrior as a friend.

Soon we were surrounded by a wild crowd, and, as I looked into their faces, I very soon knew that, with the exception of the first-comer, these were strangers to me. All alighted and gathered around us. My friend stood a little way back from the crowd. Not a word was said. Then, as myself and my two boys were sitting on the prairie, all but my friend sat down, and I was quite conscious of conflicting emotions surging in the minds of these men.

We were lawful prey. "Kill them and divide horses and saddles and bridles and guns and revolvers. These Crees are our enemies. This white man, notwithstanding what that fellow says, is a white man. They are all the same. We should kill them when we can."

Then they appealed to their better nature:

"This is John. He is our friend. These boys are under his protection."

Right here these men were in a quandary, and we, with them, sat in solemn silence. Presently, the oldest man in the crowd got out his big stone pipe. He had the stem stuck in his belt, and he

blew through this and attached it to the pipe, and then proceeded to mix a little tobacco with a lot of kinnikinic. When he was ready, I handed him a match, and when he had the pipe fully alight he passed it to me; but as I never smoked, I passed it on, and slowly the pipe went around the circle.

My friend stood like a statue, with his revolver in hand, watching the whole scene. Several times the pipe went around, my boys and self the only ones who did not smoke. Then a sturdy-looking fellow began to speak, never once looking our way. He harangued in Blackfoot, and after what seemed a long time to me, and I knew as much longer to my boys, he ceased, and the crowd gave assent to what he had said. Then, in rather good Cree, he turned to me and asked me if I was John. When I answered yes, he told me he was a Sarcce, and that these people were mostly Piegans. He said his name was "Little Drum." He had seen my father, "the God man," at Edmonton, and he had met my brother-in-law, the Red Head, or, as the Blackfeet called him, "Me-ko-cho-to-quon." He was glad that this young man recognized me. He said men's hearts were bad, but to-day we would have peace.

Then I told the crowd, through him, our business, and why we were there; and they said those cattle would now be across the Belly River, for they had seen the tracks farther south several nights since. Then I said we would not follow these cattle any further just now, but go back to our camp. They

inquired as to any chance of trade if they rode over to our camp. I said my brother was always open to trade for robes or horses, and they said they would go back to their lodges and get their trade and fresh horses, and ride with us. My friend watched them away, and motioned me the other way. I gripped his hand and looked into his eyes, and with my boys, one on each side, we rode northward.

Once more the Lord had helped us. A kind word, a smile, a little courteous act, and I had won this young fellow, and he, after months have passed, becomes our deliverer. Surely it pays to be thoroughly humanitarian and thus believe in all men.

We rode away in silence, and with a studiously dignified step; but when we had gone behind the hill we let our horses out. I told my boys to keep right up beside me and my horse would regulate the pace. Neck to neck, we galloped on. I made up my mind that few if any of those fellows would catch up to us before we would reach our camp. My boys were light riders, and I was well mounted, and we went for miles and miles on the steady gallop, straight for our distant party.

As neither we nor the horses had eaten since early morning, it was necessary that we halt somewhere. Coming out on to the trail we had made a few days previously, we presently reached our old encampment, and, dismounting, jerked our saddles off and let our horses roll and feed, while we hur-

riedly boiled our kettle and drank some tea, and munched some dried meat and watched the way we had come. Soon we saw a number of Indians on the jump after us. These I steadily kept my eyes on, and we, watering our horses, saddled up and again took the steady, hard gallop. The Indians were so eager to come up to us that they left one another straggled along the plain. This was just what I had hoped. I felt sure that if we got them strung out, our pace would keep them so. This would be all the safer for us.

My mount, who made the step, had come to me in a peculiar manner. Mrs. McDougall had suffered very much with some of her teeth, and there was no dentist nearer than the little village of Winnipeg, and we had not even a pair of forceps. When in Benton I made diligent enquiry for such, but none of the stores had any for sale, and my only chance was the army surgeon stationed at the military post.

Plucking up courage, I went to this august person, and he said, "No, sir; I have no forceps for sale. Do you want to buy a horse?"

I said, "No, sir," in my turn, and was much cast down in failing to find what I so much wanted. However, every time I came across the army doctor I put my case, and always met the same answer, "Do you want to buy a horse?"

As I was innocent of civilized ways, and my understanding dense, I did not catch on to what he meant; and yet, I did want the instruments.

Finally, I again went over to the fort and hunted

up the doctor in his den, and asked him to tell me what he meant by always turning me off with the question, "Do you want to buy a horse?"

Then he showed me a set of dental instruments, some twelve in number, neatly done up in a leather case; and he told me he had a horse in the stable, and that if I bought that horse he would give me this set, complete, in the bargain.

I grabbed the set and put them under my arm, and said, "What do you want for that horse?"

He answered, "Sixty dollars." (Our money was at that time worth sixteen per cent. more than theirs.)

I immediately said, "Come, let us go and see that horse." Reaching the stable, here was the plump little bay, which I untied and led out, and, paying the army doctor the \$60.00, thus became the owner of my present mount, and also the happy possessor of the set of instruments, and in this way became the first amateur dentist in all Alberta. I have sometimes wondered if those instruments did not belong to Uncle Sam. At any rate, with them I have relieved many a poor sufferer.

To-day the bay was doing splendidly. It was a good thirty miles from where we lunched to the river, and the sun was dropping fast. Only one Indian came up to us. He had two horses, and, by changing and riding hard, caught up.

"Ha, ha, John; you are riding hard," he would say, and I would point to the sun and say, "The river is far."

"John, your horse medicine is strong." And I

thought of Uncle Sam's corn and feed and smiled, and said, "Yes."

We never stayed a moment. I knew we could not take these horses across the river that night. They would be too warm. But what are horses, compared with life? I wanted these boys and myself across that river before dark, if I could bring it to pass. On we went, neck to neck, nose square with nose, my boys and our horses. There was no stop down nor up. Smooth or hilly, with a steady, swinging gallop, we continued our course. After a while the Sarcee who had come up dropped behind; and yet we kept our pace steady and regular, and, with the sun just setting, we were on the brow of the hill, looking down into the valley of the Big River. As I had hoped, we were seen almost at once by our party from the other side. We could see them stretching the long line and tracking the crude, heavy craft up against the strong current, preparing to bring it across for us.

Reaching the river bank, we tethered our horses and took our saddles over with us, and were thankful when we were once more a united force. Spencer was glad to see us back safe. "Never mind the cattle," was what he said.

The Indians came up, but not until late, and they remained on the south side of the river until morning, when they came across, and David traded with them. Then they recrossed and went away back to their camp, where they told that "John had the best horse medicine in the country. He could make a horse run all day."

## CHAPTER XIX.

Scouting—Wonderful instinct of animal life.

It was at this time that I did a piece of scouting which I have always been proud of. While busy with our improvised ferry, we left our cart oxen in charge of a boy, and he startled us by coming in and stating that they were lost. We sent out another, but he did not find them. Then David offered a handsome reward, and the half-breeds who had been following us from Whoopup searched the country, but did not find the cattle.

Several days elapsed, and as we had now got the bulk of our freight over to the north side, I thought it was time to look after those oxen. Late in the evening, I took the boy and had him show me the exact spot where he had seen our oxen last. I marked this, and we returned to camp. With daylight next morning I was off on foot, and began my search. I circled around the spot, coming back to where I started from, and then enlarged my circle. I kept this up all that long morning, until about eleven o'clock, when I discovered a clue, and made sure that this was the track of the missing stock.

It was very dim, and would disappear; but having determined to my satisfaction that this was indeed the track of our work oxen, I marked the spot with

some buffalo chips and ran away back to the camp. I took one of the brightest boys in our party, and we saddled up, and, taking two days' provisions, rode out to continue the search. I took the boy to where I found the clue and put him on it, and told him to track up, but never leave it, not for a foot.

I said to him, "You see yonder ridge, some miles away. Well, I am going there quickly, and if you see me make a sign, jump on your horse and come as fast as you can to me."

Then I rode on the strong gallop to the ridge, and again took up the search. This I did at right angles from the direction the cattle were taking on the last clue. I led my horse, and walked slowly, carefully scanning everything that might indicate the track of an ox. Thus I went backwards and forwards across the line of what I thought was their direction, and, after a long search, I found the track. Jumping on my horse, I swung him to and fro several times, and saw my boy catch the signal and mount his horse and come at the gallop towards me.

Then I again alighted and took up the trail. This was at times very indistinct. Heavy rains had fallen, and days and nights had intervened, and the trace was faint. When my boy came up, I put him on this later clue, and repeated my solemn injunction about staying with it, and told him to look for a signal from the next distant ridge. We had now made several miles in a short time on the track of the cattle.



Rushing my horse across some more miles, I again dismounted and searched diligently, and in good time found the track again. I now signalled my boy, who came up on the jump. I, reiterating my emphatic orders, was away for the next vantage ground, and again was successful, and brought my boy up. Thus we went on until I had tracked the oxen down to the river many miles from our camp, and across a channel on to an island, and up and down this island, and again across another channel on to another island. I began to fear that they had taken the main stream, and now would be far on their way north.

Tracking in and out of the dense brush of this second island, I presently walked right on to one of the big fellows, and my heart gave a leap of satisfaction. Here they were, the whole bunch of them. I ran them out back to the next island, got my horse and rushed them through the first island and across on to the south shore, and started them on the home stretch for our camp. I had gone some distance when my boy came in sight. Religiously, he had been keeping the track. As soon as he saw us, he galloped over, and we were happy. We had beaten the half-breeds on their native ground. We had the two-fold satisfaction. We had the cattle, and we had found them where the others, who should have been better than us, had given them up.

On the morning of our departure they had said to David, my brother, "It is useless for John to go

to hunt those cattle. They are far now. We could not find them."

However, David said, "John is different. He may bring the oxen."

As we came in sight, in the twilight of the evening of the same day as we had gone out, our whole camp cheered us, and the natives again said, "John's medicine is strong."

Another incident I came across that day of the cattle hunt was of special interest, showing how Nature had endowed animal life with the most wonderful instinct. As I rode on the search, I startled a mother antelope from her maternal bed, and she dropped her young at my feet. Immediately the little kid sought cover, crawling into the thickest bunch of grass, and hiding as much as possible, and from thence watching me with its great big eyes. This little animal was not one minute born when it was already full of the strongest instinct. I thought this was wonderful, and I marked the spot, and planned to pick this little fellow up and take him back to camp with me; that is, if my cattle hunt would permit of this.

Finding the cattle as I did, we drove them back almost as they had come, and this took us near to the spot where I had seen the antelope. I told my boy to drive on, and I rode over to look for my young friend. But when I came near the spot, the dam sprang up and jumped away, and, to my utter amazement, the little kid sprang to her side, and on they bounded with remarkable speed. I did not

run them, for I was so taken aback with this most wonderful provision of Providence and this manifestation of sublime instinct.

I said to them, as I rode on after the oxen, "You deserve to live and remain as you are."

I suppose that from three to four hours had elapsed since this little kid was born; and now it pranced away like a race horse. Here was instantaneous and wonderful instinct, and also quick coming to strength and speed.

After days of very hard work and anxious watching (for all this time we were subject to an attack or the sudden coming upon us of a wild, reckless war party); we were now on the north side of the Bow River, and the thought that this was the home side of our tedious trip made everybody glad.

## CHAPTER XX.

Nearing our fort—Mosquitoes worst I ever saw—Brother's wife gives birth to daughter.

Only the Ghost River and some small creeks were now between us and our hilltop fort. In the heavy work of crossing, my brother had bruised his hand, and for some days he had taken charge of the cooking in camp, with his one hand in a sling; but this hand was steadily growing worse, and looked serious. So I suggested his leaving us and striking for home, where he might have more attention than we could give him in camp. He accordingly left us for the long ride, which, at any rate, as straight as he could go, would be some eighty miles. This was a severe strain on him, as he was in constant pain; but he made it, and thus got relief, and also brought to our anxious people the first news they would have of us and our steady approach. We reloaded and started up the north bank of the Bow.

The mosquitoes were as I had never seen them on the plains, and I began to learn that, in the presence or even distant vicinity of the great herds of buffalo, there were no mosquitoes, nor yet much of any kind of insect life; but now, in the absence of the great herd, these abounded, greatly to our misery and that of our stock. Then, as I reasoned, I saw the day coming when man, with cultivation

and the ranging of his domestic stock, would take the place of the great herds, and do even more, and the mosquito would pass out, having fulfilled his mission in Nature's economy.

On we rolled, and, keeping out, took the Nose Creek, away up from where Calgary now is situated, and kept north to catch on to our hunting trail, and on this went westward. Thus, in due time, with many hitches—axles breaking, dowel pins snapping, collar traces and chains breaking, wagons sinking to the hubs, and many unloadings in consequence—presently we drove up to the fort, and the first trading trip from the North-West across the line to the head of navigation on the Missouri River was an accomplished fact in the history of this new country. We found our folk well, but provisions low, and our arrival with some flour and canned goods was opportune. They had experienced several scares from strange Indians, mostly Blackfeet, but Jacob had not gone very far, and every little while had sent in some of his party to look after things.

However, we were now a reunited crowd, and all thankful. Moreover, we now had a valuable helper added to our ranks, in the arrival of Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, the son of the well-known Kenneth McKenzie, of Burnside, Manitoba. My good sister-in-law was a McKenzie, and the coming of her brother was most welcome. Kenny was one of those all-round fellows who are immensely valuable in any country.

The very next day after our arrival from the South, an Indian rode in on the gallop and told us that father and mother and Sister Nellie were coming up the valley, and would soon be with us. This was truly good news, and I hurriedly threw the saddle on my horse and rode out to meet them. Sure enough, there they were. Events were now crowding in, for that very night my brother's wife gave birth to a daughter, this infant being the first white child born in all the country between the North Saskatchewan and the Missouri River. It seemed we were taking on strength daily. Here were the mother and child, five hundred miles from the nearest army surgeon in the United States and a thousand miles from the nearest doctor in Canada, possible to us, and, strange to say, both were doing exceedingly well.

Father was now arranging to go East and take mother with him. This would be mother's first return to Eastern Canada, and more than fourteen years would have elapsed since she had bade her friends and relations farewell.

Father wanted to see something of the mountains, and we took him into them by way of the "Wee-di-go Pass." Jacob was our guide, and we rode over to the Valley of the Ghost, and followed that up, and then struck into the mountains to the Wee-di-go Lake, now rechristened the Minnewakan, or Spirit Water. Then, returning to our fort, we made another trip up the Bow, as far as where Banff now is situated.

Father was delighted with these glimpses of the glorious Rockies, and his big, patriotic heart was full of prophetic vision as to the greatness of this wonderful country.

Thus we spent a few days together. All too soon time was up, and father and mother and their little party started north again. My brother accompanied them to Edmonton, from whence they would take the long journey across the plains to revisit older Canada.

We had, up to this time, and since we arrived from the South, brought between forty and fifty lodges of Stoneys and Crees with us, and the question of provisions became important. We therefore organized a summer hunt, and, making ready, struck straight out eastward on to the plains. We had very little food for the size of our camp, and belts were being shortened on all sides as we travelled out.

One morning I left the camp about daylight and rode out in advance for many miles. After some hours of steady gallop I stopped on the summit of a ridge of little hills, and, peering into the distance, thought I saw buffalo. After scanning the country all around, I took the saddle from my horse to rest and cool him, and when my eyes became familiar to the distance I could make out many bands of the much-desired game. All of this was exceedingly satisfactory, and spoke to the comforting and satisfying of the hungry crowd behind me.

Having rested my horse and feasted my eyes on

the herds in the distance, I saddled up and rode back to my party. These had made a long forenoon march, and were now, as I came in sight, resting on the east bank of the Nose Creek. I rode in, and one of my boys took my horse. The Indian woman who was my housekeeper on the trip motioned me to the shade she had improvised, where the cloth was spread and my lunch ready. I sat down and partook of the food and drank the refreshing cup of tea, and not a soul had as yet asked me a question as to what I had seen or the news I might have gleaned in my long ride.

When I was through, and the woman had removed the dishes and cloth, then Jacob, the chief, came over and said, "Well, my friend, what have you to say?"

I answered, "I have seen much food, but not until late to-morrow can we reach it, unless the herds come in to-night."

Then he rose and told the people the good news, and soon the whole camp was on the quick march out.

That evening I was much reminded of the quails in the wilderness. We camped beside a small lake, which proved to be literally swarming with moulting ducks, and hundreds of these were caught and killed without firing a shot. Our camp feasted on duck for the evening and the morning of that time.

The next day was very wet. A heavy downpour of rain had set in. Bulls were reported near, and



Jacob said, the people were anxious for meat; so we made ready and ran in the rain.

Just as we were about to charge, an Indian who was a comparative stranger to me, rode up and said, "John, we have not yet prayed." I answered, "Have you not? I have already."

Just then I let my horse out, and the race became absorbing. We killed several bulls of fine quality, and the camp was satisfied for the time being. In the evening of that day I sent for the Indian who had spoken about prayer and explained to him my ideas concerning the same. I told him that I believed prayer included my constant conduct and my care of my horse and guns, and all details of what was essential right here and now. He opened his eyes and began to comprehend that prayer was life in the full sense. He had thought, with many others, that it was a mere act.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Ran buffalo herd—Meet "Old Sun"—Become acquainted with "Big Plume"—Harassed by Blackfeet—First news of the Mounted Police—Government decides to establish law and order—Break news to Indians.

We moved out the next day, and in the afternoon ran a good-sized herd and killed many buffalo; but, greatly to our disappointment, we ran right into a large party of Blackfeet, who were leisurely moving up-country. They had, a few days previously, slain a small party of Crees. The Crees had entrenched themselves, and were ready to stand off the Blackfeet, but Old Sun had cajoled them into coming out of their trench, and had invited them into his camp.

The wily old chief was reported to me as saying to them, "What is the matter with you? Why do you thus act as if we were still your enemies? Only a few days since, we were in the Cree lodges, and we ate and drank out of the same dish, and smoked the same pipe, and we have not changed in our hearts. Come out, and come into our lodges, and we will be your friends." The foolish fellows did come out, and were all killed. This was the same Old Sun who caused the massacre of some immigrants who were coming to Edmonton from Montana, and who were encamped near Pincher Creek, while Old Sun and his camp were down on the Old Man's, near where the present Piegan Agency is

now placed. It is said, "They killed all the men, and took the women and children into camp." This was the camp we now had to do with, and as they outnumbered us by four to one, or more, we felt their presence as a menace, and also knew that our chances for a good hunt were now almost cut off. There would be no buffalo on their trail. We hurried in our meat, and I issued ammunition to all who had little or none, and we watched these people, whose camp that night might be about three miles from ours.

Here I became acquainted with a minor chief, Big Plume, who became my staunch friend from that time on, even to the day of his death.

We moved camp westward the next day, even as the Blackfeet did, and picked up some more buffalo, but were harassed all day by having to constantly watch our near neighbors, who came around us in droves. If they had not been afraid of the Stoneys we would have fared badly, and they would have gone on into our fort, and at this time had things all their own way. It was because of their heading westward that we also had so soon moved that way. We virtually at this time had two positions to defend—our own camp and the fort in the hills. Oh, how I hoped for my brother to return from Edmonton.

We now had to camp for a day or two in order to dry up and cure the meat we had killed, and the Blackfeet also camped within sight of us, for which we were thankful. To keep them in check was now

our strong desire. While Jacob and Kenny were watching camp, and our people were making provision, it was my lot to interview and be constantly interviewed by the forever coming and going of the Blackfeet. While this was our anxious experience, a courier arrived, bringing in despatches from Edmonton. It seemed that two men had posted through with these to our fort, and Mrs. McDougall had at once sent this courier on our trail with these despatches. The message was that the Government had at last determined to take action, and was now sending a force of police into the North-West for the establishing of law and order. I was to come into Edmonton and receive my commission and outfit, and then travel from camp to camp and inform the mountain and wood and plains tribes of this action of the Government, and also to explain the full purpose thereof.

We had for years told the Indians this was coming, and had, around many a campfire, exalted law and government, and in many a proud chief's lodge foretold the wonderful change that would take place. Now the change was near, and I, personally, was to be as the "John the Baptist" of the new regime of law and order and government. I sent for Old Sun and his minor chiefs, and told them that I was called in to Edmonton, and would presently come to their camp with a message from the "Queen Mother" and the Government of Canada. I noticed that they were much interested. I told them I would start on the morrow, and exhorted them to maintain the peace. At the evening

service with the Stoneys I went into this more fully, and found that these more intelligent people were delighted with the prospective change. On the morrow I left Jacob and Kenny to watch the Blackfeet and finish the curing of the provisions, and move on into our fort, and then, with the courier, I made my way in as fast as I could.

Arriving, I found my people in good spirits. I also found the two men from Edmonton, who had been sent out to bring me in, waiting and ready for return. Hurriedly making ready, and having some fresh horses brought in, I once more said good-bye, and we were off for the North country. I did not take anyone with me, depending on finding men at Edmonton.

One of the men who had come out was an old travelling companion of mine, Johnny Roland. I introduced him to my readers in a former book, "In the Days of the Red River Rebellion." I had him with me then on what we might call our Hand Hill trip. There was no better all-round voyageur than Johnny. He was as to the manner born. With the rivers, and some of these very high, thrown in, we made a record trip, three and a half days to Edmonton, two hundred and twenty-five miles of rough and tumble through the wilderness.

On the way in we met a noted traveller, one John Glenn. "Yes, gentlemen, from the Rio Grande to the Peace River of the North I have roamed." John had with him a couple of Old Countrymen who were spying out the land. These were slowly moving south on our trail.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Receive my commission from Government—Make ready for long journey—Mishap in river—Trouble in crossing stream.

At Edmonton, I found my commission, with instructions, also a credit in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, which the Government had authorized, and I rushed my preparations for this mission laid upon me. In all this I had the instruction of my Chairman and the hearty co-operation of the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

At Edmonton I found our old friend, Spencer, and he, in turn, secured a young fellow, Tom Robinson by name, and I engaged these for the trip. I bought three carts and loaded them with tobacco and tea and sugar and ammunition, and took with me a case of small cutty pipes, a full gross, which was one of the best investments I made for the purpose in view. Father and mother and George, my youngest brother, were now about to start for the long journey East.

In 1874, no iron horse had as yet belched his smoke cloud over the plains of the great West; no shrill shriek of a trembling locomotive had as yet disturbed the hush of the wilderness primeval. The cayuse in summer, and the dog train and snowshoe in winter, these were the overland means of trans-

port. The only alternative in summer was to embark on the turbulent currents of the long river or risk the stormy lake in small open boats. Father and mother would stick to the cayuse until somewhere in Southeastern Manitoba, or Northern Minnesota, they would meet the oncoming railway. There were so few of us; there were so many apparent dangers in sight before each one in the great, big, wild country that when we met we gripped hands and held on, and when we parted, the pressure was but stronger and the clasp longer. This time everybody knew we were going out into more than usual risk, so the parting was more intense.

Farewell, and we have made the crossing of the Big River, and doubled up the long, high bank, and are rolling off and out towards the mountains once more. The first day we met my comrade of the previous season, The Dried Rat. He had married. He had several carts; and he was now coming in with these loaded to trade at Edmonton. He gripped me with both hands, and called down the blessing upon myself and present work. He rushed to his cart and got out some tongues and marrow-fat and splendid dried meat, and bestowed these upon me, and said he was glad. It was most refreshing to meet this man, who had been our companion for a few weeks, but upon whom had come a wonderful change because of this association. He had become a Christian, and his outlook had broadened, and, as we gripped hands at parting, there

was a look of eternity in his eye. To thus incidentally meet this Indian friend at this time was cheering indeed, and we went on our way greatly encouraged.

The rains had been heavy; the creeks were high and roads very muddy, and our carts heavy laden, but we made long days. Early and late was our motto, as we pushed out. Near where the enterprising city of Wetuskewin now is, the road crossed a small, tortuous stream, and I had gone on ahead of the carts to have my horse unhitched and myself ready to help my men when they should come up. On the tail of my buckboard there sat a nice wooden trunk father had given me, and I left it without being lashed to the rig. Coming to the creek, I dashed the horse in and out, and jumped down beside him to unhitch. I had half done this when, casually looking down the stream, I saw something red moving rapidly. Looking for the trunk on the buckboard, I saw that it was gone. The plunge had been a little too deep, and my box had floated away. There it was, boxing the compass, away down stream, and I with my horse half unhitched. I got him out of the shafts as soon as I could, and fastened him, and then rushed down stream, cutting across the little points, and plunging into the little creek I brought my trunk ashore. Goodness knows where it would have brought up if I had not just caught the moving object as it wound in and out. I laughed to myself as I packed it back up stream, and was glad to find that it was waterproof, and



had kept right side up, for my papers and the latest mail were in it.

Battle and Blind rivers were as great streams, and we had to spend a lot of time at each one.

When we came to the Red Deer it was full, and here we caught up to the noted John Glenn and his company, "From the Rio Grande to the Peace," and here he was brought right up to a standstill by the Red Deer in one of its partially wild moods.

It was in the early morning that we came to the stream, and I pulled my buckboard and carts up under the steep banks as far as the current would allow, and myself and men went to work at once to make our crossing. I had with me two buffalo cowhides, sewn together with sinew. These I at once put into water to soak. Then I took the wheels off the only real wooden cart we had with us. With these lashed one behind the other, with the dish side up, I bound them solid with small dry poles. Then I put a side-board from the cart from hub to hub, thus making the keel of it.

Then I spread the cowhides, hair side up, on the shore, and placed our wheel frame fairly in the centre, and then drew the hides up tight all around. When all was fastened we turned our craft up to dry for a little while in the sun and wind, and when it was dry we caulked the seams and stitches in the hides with the hard tallow of the buffalo. In preparing this, we chewed it in our mouths, and then we put this drum of a boat, or, as my man said, who had never beheld such a ferry, "rum craft,"

into the stream, and began loading and crossing. Here I was, on the north side of this wide and now deep and very strong-currented river, and in my own party there were three men, and in John Glenn's also three men and a woman and child, and the only one of the whole number that could swim was myself. I told these men that I would not ferry them. The woman and child and the travelling kit and the general freight and the vehicles were enough for me to tackle with two buffalo cow skins.

We put from six to seven hundred pounds on the frail craft, and while my men gently towed it further up stream, I stripped to light underclothes, caught up a horse and fastened a good long line to his tail; then I fastened the other end of the line to the scow. Then I rode the horse out into the stream, telling my men to let go, and after us came the saucer-like skin boat. When my horse began to lose bottom I slipped to the lower side of him, and swam with one hand and feet, and with the other hand kept his head across stream, and in due time we were at the other shore, but far down from where we had started.

Here I turned the horse loose and unloaded the boat. Then, getting into it, I paddled it back to the north side, where it was towed up the long distance to where our stuff was waiting.

Thus we toiled and worked, and after I had swam the broad, cold river nine times, and then paddled back eight times, my share of this crossing was

completed; but still I had to stand in light costume and watch those five men come over, one at a time, as they each and every one ran great risk of drowning. I wanted them to take hold of the tail of a horse and let him tow them across; but no, they must ride him. I then instructed them to do as I had done, that is, slip to the lower side of the horse, and, in their case, hold on to his mane, but invariably they did not do this; for when the horse began to lose bottom, they climbed up on to his neck and sent him under. Then the horse would, by a desperate plunge, come up, and the men would now slide back, and, becoming cooler after the ducking, hold on, and the horse brought them across. It required a lot of nerving up for these men to cross a wide, wild stream without being able to swim. In all my many journeys I never remember being with so many men who could not swim a stroke. The crossing over, we loaded up, climbed to the top of the plateau, and camped a few miles from the river.

It was most opportune that the next day was Sunday, for we were a very tired company; so much cold mountain water and struggling with heavy currents was a great strain on the strongest.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Cross the Ghost River—Deliver message to Stoneys—Arrange with head chief "Bear's Paw" to accompany me—Big drunk among Indians—Interview Chief "Crowfoot."

Monday, refreshed and recuperated, we rolled on south, and camped within some seventy-five miles of our home. Early the next morning I left my party and drove on, telling them to come as fast as they could, consistent with loaded carts. Late in the day I crossed the Ghost, and darkness was upon the scene before I began to climb the long hill up to the little fort on the summit, and was overjoyed to find all well.

Old Whip-Cracker, "Pah-quas-ta-kun," had told Mrs. McDougall that John was coming. "He had sung his song, and had gone into his trance, and his spirit had met me, and our journey was prospering, and in two nights John would be home."

What a welcome one received in those days of isolation and very possible disaster. Everybody would rejoice. It was as if the lost was found. My men turned up on the third day, and in the meantime I had met the Stoneys and delivered to them the message from the Government, and arranged with the head chief, Bear's Paw, to accompany me on my journey to the plains tribes. I wanted to strengthen the peace between these people. I also

secured a first-class interpreter in one Lazarus, a Stoney, who spoke Blackfoot and Cree and Stoney equally well.

We organized our party, and taking fresh horses, started out on the work of preparing the way for the incoming Government. The Stoneys and Crees had received our message with genuine gladness. It now remained to find out the state of mind of the Blackfeet and Bloods and Piegans and Sarcees. Starting out on this trip, our party consisted of the Stoney chief, Bear's Paw, interpreter Lazarus Peacemaker, and my two white men, Spencer and Robinson, and self, five in number. I had a small Union Jack on a short pole fastened to my lead cart, and, with this flaunting in the breeze, and with the dignity of our mission inspiring our hearts, we rolled out from the mountains and down the slopes of the continent on to the great plains.

When we approached "the shoal across the river," as the Indians called what has now become the Blackfoot Crossing, we came upon fresh tracks of Indians, and also saw there were some white men camped across the river. We had hardly got into camp ourselves on the north side when down over the hill came a lot of riders, who told us that Chiefs Crowfoot and Old Sun were encamped over on the "A-che-mans," or "Provision Bag," which is a valley away up the Crowfoot Creek, and almost due north of where we now were camped. He told us that the men across the river were Long Knife whiskey traders, and they were now going across to trade some firewater.

I thought I would run the risk of requesting these traders to refrain from giving out whiskey for a day or so in order that I might have the Indians sober and able to understand my message from the Government to them. I accordingly wrote a note, requesting the gentlemen over the river to stay the outflow of stimulants for a wee bit, and telling them that I had a message from the Canadian Government, and desired a sober time, if possible. But by the way these Indians were supplied when they returned to our side of the river, and the little kegs they carried, and the noisy time we had with them that night, I judged that my humble request was not even considered by my white men brethren. They seemed to give more whiskey than ever to the Indians, and it consequently was a very lively night. Drunken and brutal and lawless white men across the river, and drunken and lawless and wild Indians all about us and our little camp—and there were hundreds more of these wild Indians within from ten to twelve miles—and with all this there came a tremendous downpour of rain, in which we were on guard all night.

When daylight came, as there were still some of the Indians with us, but now sobering up, I sent word by them to Crowfoot that I would be in his camp during that day to give him and his people a message from the "Queen Mother" and her Government in Canada. We found the camp some twelve miles north, in a fine grass country, and did not wonder that the buffalo frequented the spot.

which was so full of rich pasture and so well watered. Now the valley was occupied by the united camps of these big chiefs, Crowfoot and Old Sun. The Crees gave the Blackfoot name, Sa-po-max-eka, the full translation, "The Crow Indian Who Makes the Big Track." This man ranked as supreme in the councils of these tribes, and I was exceedingly anxious as to what his attitude might be towards the commission I represented in his camp.

When we came there, a very big drunk was going on in some parts of it, but near Crowfoot's lodge all was quiet. Speedily we were ushered into the great man's presence and received by him most courteously. He told me that he knew my brother-in-law, Red Head, or Hardisty, well, and was his friend, and he would like to be my friend also. I answered I was glad to hear this. Then I told him I had a message for himself and his people, and that if he would call the minor chiefs and head men together I would produce my commission and tell them my message.

In a short time the big lodge was full of chiefs and leading men. Through my interpreter, I told them of the coming of the mounted force across the plains, and the purpose of their coming. Tribal war was to be suppressed, and whiskey trading and horse stealing and all crimes were to be done away with. I exalted British justice, and made much of the equality of men in the eyes of the law, and most keenly and patiently those men listened to my story.

When I was done, Crowfoot took my hand and placed it on his heart, and said, "My brother, your words make me glad. I listened to them not only with my ears, but with my heart also. In the coming of the Long Knives, with their firewater and their quick-shooting guns, we are weak, and our people have been wofully slain and impoverished. You say this will be stopped. We are glad to have it stopped. We want peace. What you tell us about this strong power, which will govern with good law and treat the Indian the same as the white man, makes us glad to hear. My brother, I believe you, and am thankful." Old Sun and all the rest present gave assent to what Crowfoot had spoken.

I told them I would give them tobacco to smoke, and, as they smoked, they would remember my words, and prepare their hearts for the great, good change now near at hand. Moreover, I would give them some tea and sugar to drink, and, as they drank, they would think of the great Mother Queen and the Government of Canada, and all the people I represented, as their friends and brethren, and at this they loudly acclaimed.

I found that still further north, on to the Red Deer, there were two more camps, and after finishing with Crowfoot and this camp we continued our journey towards these. Outside the camp we had some trouble shaking off some drunken Indians; but finally, with tact and patience, got away on our journey towards the North and the Red Deer River country.



We camped in the hills, and watched our stock closely, and then the next day travelled on to the camps we were in search of. Here we found a more turbulent crowd of Indians. They had no firm hand like that of Crowfoot. However, we delivered our mission, and thoroughly prepared them, by explanation and exhortation, for the coming of government and law, as would be represented by the mounted force now on its way in.

“When would this force be here?”

Ah, that was a question I could not answer definitely. I said, “Some time before winter.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Strike for Whoopup country—In the great pasture country—  
Meet Mr. Joseph Healey—Keep Union Jack floating on  
our wagon.

Finishing our work among these northern camps, we turned south, striking for the Whoopup country, for we wanted to give all men fair warning of the change that was coming. When we were some ten miles away, a young Indian I had met several times previously caught up to us where we were lunching, and seemed anxious that we hurry up and go on. Feeling that something was up, we hurried our horses into harness and under saddle, and just as we were about starting, a troop of wild fellows came charging out of the hills, and I soon saw that they meant mischief.

I told my men to be ready, and then I palavered with these newcomers, and got out some tobacco and told the leader to distribute same to his following, and we moved on. They dismounted and started in smoking, and we moved on and travelled into the night, stopping late only to change horses and make a cup of tea. While we were doing this, one noted horse-thief came up to us and wanted to travel in our company, but I told him his pony was too small and poor to keep up to our party. So we gave him a cup of tea and some

tobacco and shook him off and continued our journey, and thus we kept on all night at a steady gait.

I wanted to put as long a distance between those last camps and ourselves as possible. When day broke we selected a good spot and went into camp. This was Sunday, and, resting in turn, we enjoyed the day as best we could.

Near evening we discovered a solitary Indian. We brought him into camp and kept him with us all night, and did not let him go until we were ready ourselves to start the other way, bright and early Monday morning. Then we made for the crossing on the Bow River, where I had found a ford the previous season. Here the water was at such a stage as to necessitate the raising of our loads and the steadying of each cart from the current as we crossed. And now we were in the great pasture country between the Bow and Belly and Old Man's rivers.

For centuries the countless herds had roamed and tramped the surface earth solid. Over this we rode and rolled at a good pace, and, crossing the little Bow away down, struck straight for Whoopup.

Crossing the Belly River, we drove up to the fort, and found the gate shut and very little sign of humanity around; but presently the gate opened to us and we entered. Mr. Joseph Healey was in charge, and had but one man with him at this time. The others were away interviewing the

Boundary Commission, which was now about finishing the work of survey to the foot of the Rockies. Both countries interested had parties of engineers and troops working together and determining the 49th parallel from Red River to the mountains. These had been at work since 1872. Healey told us he expected the Whoopup contingent back at any minute, and invited us to make ourselves welcome in the fort. And as his one man was more or less under the influence, and himself pretty well braced, he set to work preparing a meal for our party.

"Unbuckle and lay off your armory for the moment, Parson John," was his kind injunction to myself, and while we were at lunch he discussed the situation from his standpoint.

"There was not much need for Government intervention in this country. He and his friends had been able to and could keep the rougher element out. For instance, there was So-and-So. He came in and was going to run things. He lies under the sod at Standoff. And there was So-and-So. He had aspirations, and we stretched him beside the other fellow. And there was So-and-So. He went wild, and we laid him out at Freezeout, and some more at Slideout. These bad men could not live in this country. We simply could not allow it. No, Parson John, we did not let any really bad men stay in this Whoopup region." Thus my friend did argue, and conclude that the Government's action was not needed.

However, I told him the Government was coming; and I read to him my instructions. He drew a long breath and gave a solemn sigh of resignation. We were still at our lunch when we heard a wild crowd approaching, whooping and yelling, and Healey said, "I guess the boys are coming home."

Sure enough, here they were; and as Joe opened the gate, in they dashed, more or less under the influence of alcohol. When they saw my carts and the little Union Jack, they blustered and swore, but did not pull it down. Some of them I had seen before, but many were strangers. They had just come from the biggest kind of a circus. Having supplied the men of the Boundary Commission with their whiskey, these fellows had thoroughly enjoyed the fist fights and general rows in the camp of the survey. They reported the survey finished for this section, and that the line struck the mountains immediately on the north side of Chief Mountain. They also reported that the last seen or heard of the Mounted Police was away east of Woody Mountain.

Said Mr. Davis, afterwards the first member from Alberta in the Dominion Parliament, "You are looking for the police? Well, I can tell you, there will be no Mounted Police in this country this year. You can just bet on that. I can tell you, Parson John, we will flood this country for one more year with whiskey."

I told him I could not help the delay, nor yet

understand it; but my instructions were that the Canadian Government was now sending in a body of police, and had fully determined to establish law and order.

He said, "Well, when this is done we will drop into line and obey the law; but until then we will do as we ———— please."

My instructions were to report to the commanding officer of the Mounted Police, if I should find him. However, this latest information relieved me of going any farther just now. I had seen the representative Indians of the mountains and the plains, and had also gone to the headquarters of the white men concerned; and now, through these, the whole country was officially informed of our Government, so I concluded I could very well feel I had done my part, and return as quickly as possible to our own fort and people.

Moreover, I knew my brother had gone on the second trip to Fort Benton, and the care of our families and dependents was at this time, under Providence, upon the Stoney Indians; and these were, in turn, dependent upon the food supplied. I therefore told my men to make ready and we would immediately turn our faces northward.

I think it was at this time that a big, blustering fellow came up and accosted me in this wise:

"———, ———; and you are the man who has written to the Eastern people and Government, telling all kinds of lies about us men who are trying to make a living in this country? Don't

you know you will catch it for this? Don't you know that seventy white men between here and Benton have solemnly put their names to paper to see this thing through? I tell you, your game is up."

I looked him over, and said, in my turn, as he shook his fist in my face, and reached his hand around and gripped the handle of his revolver, "My dear sir, as you know, it is a question of truth or falsehood. If I have, as you say, lied about you and your friends and conditions in this country, there is no need for a fuss about it. Of itself it will fall through. But, let me tell you, if I have spoken the truth, it will not matter if seventy times seventy men solemnly put their names to paper, as against what I have said and done. I will prevail, because the truth, and the truth only, shall prevail."

Just here, unconsciously to me, another man was at my back. He clapped me on the shoulder and said, "Bully for you, Parson John, and — it, I will stand by you."

I saw the first man slink back, and, turning to my new-found friend, beheld a different type of man. He was with these men, but not of them. We shook hands warmly on the grounds of eternal justice and sterling principle.

Spencer, who had come with us thus far, decided to go on to Sun River and find out about his cattle, but Robinson decided to return with me. I bade these wild frontiersmen good-bye, and, with our

little Union Jack still proudly waving in the breeze, we re-forded the Belly River, and climbing up the big hill, journeyed out northward.

The next day I ran buffalo, and we took the meat of a fine cow for our food supply. Near High River my two Indians, who had shown the finest pluck and given me most devoted service, left us to join their people, whom they expected to find up along the foot of the mountain. Tom Robinson and myself were now alone, and our hope was that we would not meet any plains Indians for the rest of the way. In this we were strengthened by the absence of buffalo. These were still farther out on the plain, and in this much were a guarantee of the absence of large bands of Indians.



## CHAPTER XXV.

Up in the foothills—Visit the fort—What might have been.

The Stoneys and Wood Crees could generally live anywhere, but the true plainsman would starve if the buffalo upon which he depended were not forthcoming. We might meet a horse-stealing war party, but we hoped not. On, across the Sheep Creek and many other creeks. When we had crossed the Elbow, and come to the shack entitled the Old Mission, we found the priest absent, but the two noted would-be priests, Elixie and John LaRue, in possession. Though with us it was only Friday, yet with these gentlemen it was Sunday, and Elixie had his flag flying, and was celebrating mass in his way. Our coming to these eccentrics at this time was a heaven-send to them. Both were ardent smokers and tea-drinkers, but they had neither tobacco nor tea. I supplied them with some of both these articles, and they gave me their individual and united blessings. When I told them about the boundary line, Elixie said that was just as he had arranged it. He had stood on the divide just south of Chief Mountain, and, waving his hands southward, he had said to the Long Knives, "You can have that and we will keep this to the north." He was very glad to know that both countries had

thus strictly kept to his arrangement of the division of the Great West.

While Elixie was talking to me, John LaRue stood back, and every little while, with a look of profound sadness, would catch my eye, and significantly tap his head indicating that his friend was away off. Poor fellows, we left them much encouraged with the gifts of tobacco and tea, and went on.

And now we were well up in the foothills, between the Elbow and the Bow rivers, and Tom suggested to me that I ride on and leave him to camp for one night alone. I looked at him and felt this was kind, and evidenced a lot of pluck in this man. I said, "Thank you, Tom; I will do so; and I will hope to meet you at the Bow River in the morning. Wait for me at the crossing," and away I went on the gallop, to know in a few hours what had taken place at home.

Soon I was at the summit of the great hill commanding the beautiful Bow Valley for many miles, and eagerly scanning the landscape for the sign of humanity, but saw none. Solitude reigned. Away across and on up into the hills I had left our people and the little fort which was our home. Would I find all well, or would I find a ruin, and nothing else? Thus I communed with myself, and urged my horse down into and on across the valley to the ford. Noting that this was possible though rather high, in I spurred my horse, and presently was taking the straightest, as also the best-hidden, way to the fort, and came in sight of this without as yet seeing a soul.

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There was the fort; but were there any people in it? However, riding into the square, here they were, alive and well, and with a silent "God be thanked," I alighted from my horse amongst my own people. They were hoping and longing, but not expecting me for some time to come, and my sudden arrival was doubly welcome, and, as it turned out, none too soon, for I had scarcely been home two hours when a party of the toughs of the Blackfoot camp rode up, and I can tell you they were surprised to find me at home. When I threw open the door and confronted them, it was as if they had seen a spirit. They expected that I was still in the distant South. "Ah-he-yah! John!" I saw they were greatly taken aback. They had come for mischief, that was plain, but now they were disconcerted; but how long this mood might last was the question. They hung on to their horses and held their arms ready, and I, to gain time, palavered and kept wondering what the next move might be. We were but few; they were strong; and presently they might awake to our weakness and suddenly act. I talked to those wild fellows, and hoped and prayed for deliverance, and even then it was coming, for quietly and without any one of us noting their approach, suddenly several young Stoneys were beside me.

Oh, how glad I was, and in my heart praised God and took courage.

"How are you? Where do you come from?"

They answered, "Close by."

"How many lodges?" and the answer came again, "Three times ten."

I took care to make the Blackfeet understand these answers, and they responded by at once becoming ardent lovers of peace and kindly intentions. But it made me fairly sick at heart to think of what might have been.

Once more we had passed a crisis in the affairs of the little company in the fort on the hill.

Early next day I got rid of the party of Blackfeet, and they started down to the river to meet Tom. I was there just in time to catch him and help to raise the stuff in the carts and bring these across the ford, which was always a dangerous spot.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Tribes begin to gather—Hudson's Bay Co. decide to establish a fort—Make friends with Indians—My brother returns from Fort Benton—Buffalo abound.

And now, as autumn approached, the tribes began to gather. Every day for two months we had our hands full with these distinct people. We had six languages, all radically different from the others, and all going at once around us. Blackfeet, Bloods, Piegiens and Sarcees from the plains, altogether depending on the buffalo; Wood Crees and Wood Stoneys, who, because they could live independent of the plains, and were more individual in character, generally despised the plains tribes. We had the Mountain Stoneys, who frequented both mountain and plain, but took on type mostly from the foothills and mountains, which made them to feel that they were at the top in pluck and ability to hunt and to fight. And truly, this was their record, for, from the data at hand, for the last one hundred years this had been written in the history of this country. On the white man's side, we had at this time our mission party, and my brother David, and his interests as trader and adventurer. And now, after hard work on my part in making reports, and by personal appeal, the Hudson's Bay Company was once more daring to come out and establish a fort beside us. It was my strong desire to draw off

the trade from the whiskey men to the south, and we were greatly cheered by the coming of Postmaster John Bunn, as representing the Hudson's Bay Company.

At this time there was not a *bona-fide* settler south of the North Saskatchewan. We were there by ourselves, a few English-speaking men and women amongst thousands of natives, and these speaking different languages, and out of the long past still at enmity and in a condition of war with each other.

Under these circumstances it was a serious problem to keep the peace. In each camp were those who desired it; but the crowd who did not care, and the crowd who had personal grievances to be adjusted and revenge to be gratified, these kept our friends and myself on the move. We had to be on guard day and night. Many a time I was called upon to pass judgment between parties of the same tribe, and often between those of distinct nationality. Horses and women were, almost in every case, the reason given for the trouble.

I made it a rule to listen to the quality of evidence rather than the quantity thereof; but to arbitrate or give judgment with all parties before you fully armed, and their several constituencies behind them ready to fight, made me feel somewhat nervous. However, we knew we were preparing the people for government, which we now hoped would soon come upon the scene. In the meantime, "John's" ruling prevailed, at any rate in the vicinity of our fort.

If some of my readers had looked in on some of our Sunday morning or evening services, they would have thought the whole affair most unique. All manner of costumes, feathers and paint, porcupine quills and beads, buckskin and buffalo leather, ermine and robes, and, mixed up amongst all this, many colors and many-typed congregation, were the earnest few who were as the leaven, working for peace and righteousness.

Every day we were gaining ground and making friends. Among the Blackfeet, we won over Bull Elk, and Eagle Ribs, and Bear's Child, and Big Plume, and Old Sun, and we had already, as previously narrated, gained the confidence of Crowfoot, the head chief; and now these men counted us as of themselves. Then, among the Bloods, we had won over Rainy Chief, and Iron Pipe, and these prominent Bloods looked upon John and his brother, "the man with the tooth out," as, of white men, the best fellows they had ever met. Then, among the Sarcees, there was great big Bull Head, who claimed me as a brother, and, as I have told you in my last book, held me as prisoner in his camp until we got acquainted. Among the Stoneys, there were Bear's Paw, and Cheneka, and Jacob. These were the chiefs of the Mountain and Wood Stoneys, and were as our own brethren; and thus our work went on with great encouragement.

While the Indians were with us in large numbers, my time was altogether taken up with them, counsel, service, medicine, law, judgment, making peace, and lecturing to crowds on government and

civilization, on invention and education, and the effect of Christianity on the nations of humanity. Thus our work was constant, and only when these tribes struck their lodges and moved away did there come any respite and chance to rest, and opportunity to relax nerve and strain.

It was at this time that my brother, returning from Fort Benton, brought into our room two chairs, and presenting one of them to Mrs. McDougall, gave the other to me. I had spent more than fourteen years in the great North-West, but was now, for the first time, the happy possessor of a factory-made chair. Certainly we were coming up, and civilization was advancing towards our big wilderness. When opportunity served, I found myself sitting in that chair, and, consciously and unconsciously, my hand would slip down over its smooth, varnished surface, and I felt the thrill of luxury tingle through my veins.

By the 1st of November, most of the plainsmen had gone down the Bow and out on to the plains. Some of the Stoneys had scattered in every direction into the mountains and Northland, and we, with the hunters of the camps left with us, went on a fresh meat hunt. We found buffalo within fifty miles of home, and we had some very exciting chases after them. Chief Cheneka was my constant companion on this hunt, and I felt this was my opportunity of cementing a bond of friendship with this influential old man, who touched both Crees and Stoneys. The country we ran in was full of badger



holes, and the loose snow being from eight to twelve inches in depth, made them very hard to see. Many a tumble was accomplished, and of all our party who ran I think I was the only one to escape a fall on that trip. Horse at full speed, and in a flash he was on his head, rolling or sliding over and along the frozen and snow-covered surface of mother earth; and the man, oh, where was he? His gun was often difficult to find, and when neck and limb escaped, and when horse and man came together again, many a hearty laugh was experienced by both victims as well as onlookers.

On this trip the buffalo were in prime condition, and I got my name up with the Indians for killing fat animals. In a short time we were loaded to the full, wagons piled with fine meat, and carts, notwithstanding faithful greasing, creaked and groaned as we travelled homeward. This time David went ahead, and I remained with our transport. There were three white men outfits in our party—mine, David's and the Hudson's Bay Company's—and quite a number of Indians; and thus, on wagon and cart and many pack-horses, we were taking home many thousands of pounds of meat; and yet we knew that this was but a temporary supply, and that, in order to spare our dried provisions and the little flour we had freighted from Fort Benton, we would in a few weeks have to take to the hunt again and again. The spring and early summer would need all the cured food we had at our command.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

No word from Mounted Police—Whiskey traders flourishing—  
Ugly rumors from Old Man's River—Decide to investigate  
—Encounter violent storms—Fall in with Indians.

It was now about the end of November, and winter in 1874 came early and strong; and listen as we constantly did, there was as yet no word from the Mounted Police. Had they turned back to the Red River? Were they wiped out as they marched? We were growing anxious. The whiskey traders were flourishing, and bolder than ever. Indians were being killed, and killing each other. Some awful orgies had taken place not very far from our vicinity. How long was this to last?

In the meantime, we went on with our preparation for permanent buildings, and the saw and axe and song made the woods ring on the higher hills near our fort. In December, rumors began to come in of a strange arrival on the Old Man's River. It was said, "Men were being hung over there; that there were not sufficient trees on the island to hold the people that were being hung by these strange men who had come fresh upon the scene."

Runners came in to find out what we knew, and as the camps were becoming excited, I concluded to make the trip south and ascertain at first-hand the facts in the case. Spencer, who had come back

from locating his cattle on their old range, and now was wintering with us, volunteered to accompany me, and we set out on horseback, with a pack animal carrying our camp equipment and provisions.

As soon as we left the Bow Valley we found the snow deep and travel slow. Coming to the Elbow at the Catholic mission, we were gladly welcomed by all the white people found there. These consisted of the Rev. Mr. Scollin and the famous John LaRue and a trader who was an old friend of ours, Sam Livingstone by name, who had left the North country and come south after the buffalo trade. The reason of our special welcome was that a crowd of very much excited Blackfeet and Bloods were camped in the vicinity, and these were showing signs of mischief.

The rumors from the South were so alarming the Indians reasoned that their time was short here below, and said, "We may as well go in and kill and rob these white men, and have as good a time as we can while we have a chance." Coming as we did sort of broke up the spell, and very soon we were in council with the leading men among the Indians, who were delighted because of our proposed trip, and said, "John was brave," and wished us a "*Bon voyage*" in their fashion, and told me they would await with patience and great interest our coming back with news.

That night I saw history repeating itself, and, as of old, the criminal taking refuge in the sanctuary.

Spencer had not seen John LaRue since the former had passed himself on him as the Very Rev. Father LaRue, the much-travelled and most philanthropic of missionaries, and under this guise had done him out of his horse and belongings. LaRue, hearing of my arrival, came in to where I was being interviewed by the Indians in the trader's room, and made a fuss over me. He was turning to Spencer when Spencer recognized him, and pulled his revolver. LaRue bolted into the dark, and I gripped Spencer and told him this would not do at this time. We were all running the risk of our lives, and a fuss might make a general row.

Later on in the evening I went over to call on the Priest Scollin, and found that, up at the head of the one-roomed building, there was the little altar, curtained off, and when I asked Father Scollin where LaRue was, he significantly pointed to the altar. John LaRue had literally taken refuge in the sanctuary, doubtless forgetting that, to men of this day, and especially to one like Spencer, this would not save him were it not for other influences.

Starting out the next morning, we made slow progress, and the snow deepened, and the storm of wind and cold came on, and, do the best we could that night, our camp was one of the most miserable of my very many hard experiences. That very night the lay brother who was the one companion of Father Scollin was frozen to death. This we learned later, but because of our own experience at the time, were not surprised.

Travelling on, we made Sheep Creek for the next night, and found a couple of white men domiciled in the old trading post. These men were also trading, but we saw no signs of whiskey. What I did notice was that their pile of robes was altogether out of proportion to any goods or stock in sight. However, we bunked in with them for the night, and went on our way the next morning. Such was the depth of snow it took us all the next day to make High River, where we camped in the brush. As I was in a hurry, we started out from this camp some time about midnight, and when daylight came were on the ridge, looking down upon Mosquito Creek. The snow was deep, and, of necessity, progress was slow.

Here we saw several herds of buffalo, and almost simultaneous with sighting the buffalo, we saw a party of Indians come out of the hill and dash at them.

Notwithstanding the intense cold of the night and the still colder period of the early morning, and the monotonous progress we had made, we could not but stop on the hill's summit for the moment and watch this scene of natural beauty and genuine primitive life. The clouds and lower atmosphere had passed off, and the clean, cold, crisp, snow-covered crust of mother earth and the heavens above were in complete harmony. White and blue were here in rich measure. The big wealthy plain at our feet, stretching in every direction, and gently undulating even as the ocean's surface when in

calmer moods. Yonder, the bolder foothills, with their blending of altitude and timber and plains in graceful shapings, placed as fitting approaches to the greater glory and majestic proportions of the wonderful mountains beyond.

And now the sun touched the distant peaks, and covered, in quick movement, as with a gorgeous garment, the mighty picture. And as we gazed and worshipped, here at our feet were the cattle of God, unbranded, and wild and free; but even as we looked out upon them came the natural children of the Great Father, and the chase began. As the killing would be right in the line of our travel, it became us to wait a bit and watch the hunt. Out from the scattered crowd of men and women who had braved the cold of the early morning came the hunters proper. There may have been from twenty-five to thirty in the little dark spot that moved quickly on the big expanse of solemn white. Presently the herds bunched up and started on the run, and the race began, and the little dot of humanity and horse flesh and blood scattered after them. Most of the killing was done with arrows, and only a shot or two detonated through the keen, frosty air. Very soon little small black dots could be seen here and yonder, indicating the dying and dead victims of the run.

Wondering how these people might receive us, and who they were, we struck straight through their kill, and as we approached they gathered up and intercepted us. At once several recognized me,

"Hah, John!" "Es-koon-a-ta-pi, John"; and they expressed great pleasure at my going south to ascertain what had come to pass. They had heard strange rumors, but now John would bring the news, and they would know the truth. They pressed upon us some tit-bits of their kill, and, with their good wishes, we went on.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Make for Pine Creek—Cross the Porcupine Hills—Indian's body cached in tree—Meet Col. Macleod of Mounted Police—Police build fort—Government established without a shot being fired—Reach home again.

We made our course for the north end of Pine Creek, and in the evening of the day found some wood, and had our first meal since the previous midnight. Hurrying with our supper, we packed up and made over the spurs of the Porcupine Hills on buffalo trails, which helped us very much. I ran ahead, and Spencer drove the horses after me. It was rather cold to ride, and our horses had come through deep snow and were tired.

It was after midnight when we came out on the Willow Creek, where it debouches from the hills, and where we hoped to find timber for camp purposes; but during the autumn and earlier in the winter large camps of Indians had been in the vicinity, and all the dry wood was used up. However, by dint of much effort, we found some small willows, enough to boil our kettle and make a cup of hot coffee. In hunting up wood, I wandered up the creek among some large cottonwood and poplar trees, and in the dark night, feeling for what might be a dry limb, I took hold of a frozen limb of a long, tall Indian. His friends had cached his



dead body in the forks of the tree. The body was wrapped in a hide of buffalo leather, which was lashed around with green buffalo hide. This frozen limb, stretching out in the dark, and seeming to be as a part of the tree, gave me a queer sensation, and I strolled back to Spencer and felt somewhat comforted when I found him. We cut some green willow, and cleaning away the snow in the lee of some shrub, floored our camp with willows, and then made our bed thereon. Then we cut a hole in the ice of the river, and, hastily making up a small fire, succeeded in securing a hot cup of coffee, and at once rolled into bed. We were tired; we had kept up the march for the full twenty-four hours and better, under difficult travel in very cold weather, and soon were asleep.

When I awoke it was coming daylight, and as I had uncovered to look I felt the warming change of a chinook. I put out my hand and felt the snow-bank beside me, and already it was softening, and I shouted to my companion, "Chinook, old fellow; chinook!" Gladly and quickly we were up, and set to work to gather some wood with which to make our breakfast. In doing this I took Spencer up to where the tall Indian was hung in the forks of the tree. He looked at me and said, "Did you see this last night?" and when I said, "Yes," he answered, "Well, I am glad you did not tell me."

All day we travelled in deep snow, but this was slowly lessening because of the west wind blowing, as it did, full and strong. We managed to boil our

kettle at the cut bank on Willow-Creek. Already it was late in the evening of the day, and we went on through the night. Coming down into Willow Creek, near its junction with the Old Man's, we began to move carefully, for here somewhere we expected to find either the police or the whiskey traders in force.

It was now after midnight, and just as I thought of camping and waiting for daylight I saw a glint of light and concluded to make for it. We found this was across the Old Man's River, on what was known as the Island:

Reaching the place, we found that the light came from a small shack, and we were very fortunate when, on opening the door in answer to a clear "Come in," we found ourselves in the presence of Col. Macleod, the officer in command of the Mounted Police. He was making his home temporarily with Mr. Charles Conrad, who represented the firm of I. G. Baker & Co., of Fort Benton and Montana. Charlie, with his usual energy, had got up a store and warehouse, and had put up this little shack to live in. And here we were, by good fortune, domiciled with these men, who were at the top representing the Government of Canada and the southern trade of this country, as this now lapped over from Montana. I, in loyalty to the Hudson's Bay Company and English and Canadian trade, had done what I could to inspire the Honorable Company; but it was unfortunate that the Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company at

this time was of the non-enterprising type, and thus the live American firm of I. G. Baker & Co. went in without opposition and gathered great wealth through our Government opening up this Western country by the establishing of law and order. The Government alone for many years was a large source of business and income for this active firm, and as they did not deal and had not dealt in intoxicating liquors of any kind, we could not but be in hearty sympathy with them.

We were hospitably entertained by Mr. Conrad, and Col. Macleod was very glad to meet me. He had many things to talk about. I told him at once that I had not come to give any information concerning anyone at this time, but to ascertain for myself as to their arrival and what we might now depend upon. That, so far as this trip was concerned, I gave the whiskey traders of the North every chance to stop the traffic or get up and go out of the country; but if there came to me direct evidence hereafter, now that I had come to find him and his police with regularly constituted authority to carry out the law, why, then I would lay information against anyone infringing upon the same.

The Colonel did me the honor to confer with me as to past crimes. He said that already several cases had been brought to his attention.

What would be the best way to deal with these?

I gave it as my opinion that he should start with a clean sheet. This country had been without law.

It was not what was past, but what would occur now and in the future, we had to do with. I said that "Let by-gones be by-gones" would be my policy; but now, make every man walk right up to the mark. Furthermore, I modestly interjected, there should not be one law for the white man and another for the Indians.

In all this the Colonel heartily agreed. He said he thought this was fair and just, and would act accordingly. I found the force a fine, hearty lot of fellows, and on this short trip became acquainted with a number of the officers and men. They were busy building a fort out of the cottonwood and poplar timber of the valley. Most of the men were living in tents, and the sharp weather and storm we had come through had tried them sorely; but they were looking forward to quarters, however crude, in good time. Their unacclimated horses were dying. Their long trip across the plains, and too much red tape withal, had been more than these horses could stand. To this extent the force was sadly crippled. The men's clothing had worn out on the long march, and now they were being dressed in buffalo leather pants and robe coats. However, all hands were cheerful and hardy, and glad to have finally reached their objective point for the present.

I could not help but think that they might have come on the scene three months earlier, which would have given them so much better season for building and preparing for the winter. The dis-

tance they had come was not so great, but the manner of their march delayed them. Too much of the military and too little of the practical had with them caused delay, as in very many instances in the history of campaigns. However, they were now here; of this we were sure, and consequently thankful. The storm and deep snow had kept them from sending out hunting parties, and the camp was down to bacon and hardtack; but this would be remedied when buffalo could be secured, and also flour brought in from Montana. Freight, that winter of 1874-5, was ranging from 8 to 12 cents per pound between Fort Benton and Macleod. During the one day we spent with the police, Col. Macleod said to me, "How far is it to the 49th parallel?" After thinking a minute of the time I had taken to either walk or ride or drive the distance, I told him that it was between 48 and 50 miles. Then the Colonel took some observations, and, making his calculation, said to me, "How did you know? Had you measured it?" I answered, "No, sir; but I have travelled the trail so much, and have journeyed so many thousands of miles that I can come pretty close in my estimates." Then he told me it was a little more than 49 miles from where we were.

I renewed my acquaintance with quite a number of the Whoopup fraternity, all of them very decent and law-abiding citizens now, "you bet."

Thus, without a shot being fired, government was established simultaneously at Edmonton in the North, and at Macleod in the South. A mere hand-

ful of men, unused to this wilderness life, "tender-feet" for the most part, had come across the plains of the southern North-West Territories, and another company had taken the old trail up the Saskatchewan, and not a man had said them nay, just because the whole country was tired of tribal war and constant lawlessness, and was looking and longing for this change which was now brought about by the advent of the representatives of government and order. I claim that the missionary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ had more to do with the peaceful occupation of this immense land than any other man. He was the real forerunner in this case. In buffalo and moose-skin lodges, in the centres of great encampments, beside many camp-fires, during countless conversations as thousands of miles across country were being traversed, he glorified the law, he extolled order, he preached forever peace and loyalty to good government, and thus the minds of the people were prepared and waiting for this day we now beheld.

This was as we thought, as we slept beside the Colonel that night in December of 1874, and thus we felt as we rode forth the next morning to return and spread the news of the arrival of the Mounted Police, and give the reason for their coming again and again as opportunity occurred. That is, we would go on as we had in all the past fourteen years and better of our lives in the far West, to emphasize righteousness and liberty and equality of the race.

When we had taken stock of our equipment at the cut bank that day we found our "grub-pile" to consist of Chicago bacon and hardtack; and as we sat and munched this we were sorry that we had not brought a rifle with us. We each carried big revolvers, but the horses we were riding were not buffalo runners, and it seemed as if there would be no change until we reached home.

However, as we were steadily jogging northward that afternoon there came a fine band of buffalo out of the hill, and as these rushed across our course, perhaps a half a mile ahead of us, one of them suddenly dropped out of the race, having broken her leg. I said to Spencer, "I will gallop up and take stock of this animal." As I approached I saw that here was a very fine heifer, in splendid condition; so, as she turned to fight me, I drew my revolver and shot her dead, and Spencer coming up with the pack animal, we took on a fine lot of fresh meat. Verily, we were now well provisioned for the trip home.

We planned to reach the Sheep Creek trading post about daybreak. Accordingly, camping in the timber on High River, we made our way through the deep snow, which at this point had not been very much affected by the last chinook, and reaching Sheep Creek long before daylight, we had to go down into a coulee and make a fire and wait for daybreak. Then we moved in on to the traders; but while I noticed that the robe pile had grown larger, and the goods on the shelf remained about

as before, still there was not even the smell of whiskey anywhere. Their plan was not to allow any liquor to be used about the place. The Indian must take it home to his camp, or they would not let him have it. All this I found out later.

In due time we reached home. The trip had taken longer than I had planned. The snow from south of High River to within a few miles of the Bow was most unusually deep and very heavy to travel through. I had previously been summoned in a most peremptory manner by the "acting Chairman" to attend a district meeting at Edmonton on January 1st, 1875.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

Start for northern fort and settlement on bank of North Saskatchewan—Found Mounted Police quartered at Edmonton—Col. Jarvis' marvellous stories—Police adapt themselves to new conditions—Find our cache on the Red Deer.

I had been told by the party who brought me the summons, as also in letters from the North, that this Chairman was going to put a stop to all trading and bartering on the part of missionaries, and I was therefore much surprised to find a post-script at the bottom of the summons, asking me to bring in to him "a couple of good buffaloes." I smiled as I thought of the inconsistency of the thing, right here apparent; but what of the larger inconsistency of the thought held by many, that the missionary had no right to barter or trade with the people to whom he is sent. Here we were, without any currency other than that of kind, no banks or mint, a horse, a dog, a gun, a blanket, a fathom of cloth or print, a shirt or a coat or a cap, and on the other hand, a robe, or dressed leather, or fresh or dried provisions, or furs of any kind; these were the only currency of the times, and how in the name of common sense could one do without bartering. No; there must always be adaptation to conditions, as these are found; and there can be no general

law but that of equity and right dealing, and, by the grace of God, there we stood, and would stand, notwithstanding anybody's opinion or ruling. My brother was going in, and also the Hudson's Bay Company was sending in a couple of men; so we made ready and started just before Christmas for the winter journey to the northern fort and little settlement on the bank of the North Saskatchewan. We found the snow deep and almost intact, and we were continuously breaking the trail; but as there were four of us taking this in turn we made pretty good speed. We were using horse toboggans, long, flat, two-board sleighs.

We travelled all Christmas Day, but coming to the Peace Hills, where the town of Wetuskewin now stands, late Saturday evening, we went into camp and prepared to spend the Sabbath at this point. There was an abundance of dry wood, and we worked late gathering an immense pile of this, and made a good comfortable open camp, and then settled down to rest, even as the Lord had, in His infinite mercy and wisdom, ordained.

Sunday evening David brought out from his sled a munificent supper and made a special spread, and I asked him the reason of all this. He reminded me that this was the 27th of December, and my birthday, and that my good sister-in-law had thus made ready and commissioned him to bring out this supper and give us the feast if possible. I was delighted and grateful for this kind thoughtfulness, and we, as a little company, in the profound soli-

tude of the time, most thoroughly took pleasure in this genuine surprise birthday feast. I had, in the strenuousness of my life for many years, hardly ever thought of these things. The Sabbath was the only day we aimed at observing.

At Edmonton we found things much the same. The Mounted Police had come with the winter, and were quartered in the Hudson's Bay Fort. Col. Jarvis was in command. Capt. Guion was his second. Sergeant-Major Steele (now Col. Steele of Strathcona Horse fame) and the rank and file did the work. A few strange faces were to be seen outside of the police. The new Chairman *pro-tem*. was on the ground, having taken seventy-three days to come from Winnipeg to Edmonton. No wonder the Rev. Lewis Warner found the great North-West interminable.

We held our district meeting, and by my handing in the two buffaloes at the opportune time we avoided the lecture on trade and barter which had been in preparation for us. From letters I met at Edmonton, I found I was authorized to engage a teacher for my mission, and at once I began to look around for a suitable person. A Dr. Very, who had recently come into the country, being recommended to me, I engaged him to return with us to the mountains. The Hudson Bay Company's men who had come north with us had loaded up and started back almost immediately. For the first fifty miles of our journey we had the company of Col. Jarvis. He had sent on Sergt.-Major Steele

and some nine or ten men, and proposed to travel with us until we caught up to his party. Their objective point was Buffalo Lake, where a large camp of mixed-bloods and Indians were wintering, and where it was reported that whiskey was plenty. It was a keen, cold winter's night, and we were in the open camp under the lee of some willows, and the Colonel gave us a graphic account of the trip from the Red River to Edmonton. The expedition of Sir Charles Napier into Abyssinia, which had become quite historic, was not in it with this most formidable journey which the Colonel gave us a very fiery description of. It was gross blasphemy which spoiled the whole business, and I felt I must take the wind out of his sails and let him down easy in so doing, for he was our guest for the time.

After he had cursed the Canadian and British governments and the whole North-West country, the rivers especially, and wound up expecting us to applaud such wonderful heroism, I said to him, "Colonel, nine or ten miles north of Edmonton there dwells, when at home, a French half-breed who, when the spring comes, will load his carts with his winter's trade and catch of furs and pemmican, and, with his wife and children, will take the trail you came by, crossing all the streams you crossed. In due time he will reach Fort Garry; then he will sell his furs and robes, and purchase his fresh supply of goods and articles of trade, load these on to his carts, turn his face westward, recross all the streams, now at their highest, reach

his home north of Edmonton, put up several stacks of hay, fix up his winter quarters, mend his carts and harness, and having carefully stored his goods, he and his family, with the same horses and carts, will cross the Saskatchewan and travel out from two to three hundred miles on to the plains, make a big turn through the country, run buffalo, stand on guard day and night, make many bales of meat, make many bags of pemmican, and finally, being now well loaded, return over the long journey to their home north of Edmonton. And still, it is not yet winter; and thus this native has travelled about three times the distance you and your party did, Colonel; and they had no government behind them, and what they have done is a common occurrence in this Western country."

It is needless to say that the Colonel saw the point, and we heard no more about the greatness of the feat of crossing the plain on an old trail in a summer's time.

That was a cold night in the lee of a big snow-bank and some willows it had caught on to, sparkling stars gemming the firmament, the great disc surcharged with frost-laden ozone from 30 to 40 below. To the Colonel, from the comfortable home and barracks of Eastern Canada, and my doctor teacher from London, England, and the ship's cabin, such a capacious, marvellous, sleepy, living-room as we were now in was a new experience. However, we had the huge campfire, and if we worked hard we could keep this up with a spark-

ling, laughing flame, which, for a few feet around, tempered the climate of our huge refrigerator. We sang a hymn, and knelt in prayer, and if the act of worship did not do any more, at least it hushed the blasphemous soldier, and it also thawed our backs for the little while we turned them to the big fire as we knelt in prayer.

Up and on before daylight, and in course of a few miles we came up to the police outfit, some of whom, like their commanding officer, had now spent their first night in strong winter weather in the open. This was splendid discipline for these men, with the work they had come into the North-West to perform. Let but the native and the mixed-blood or lawless white man know that this force was always ready, through storm and cold and distance, then the law would be observed, and right there and then we would continue to lay the foundation of a peace-loving and law-abiding citizenship.

I was glad to see these Easterners show as much adaptability as they did. Many a hard knock did they receive. To be battling with the elements on unbeaten trails and under beclouded skies is the hardest kind of work, and the man capable of strong development would stay and learn in such a field as was now opening before these men.

Soon our trails diverged, they to follow the sometime beaten roads to Buffalo Lake, and we to break a fresh one for ourselves, as already the tracks of our Hudson's Bay men were obliterated, except here and there where there was a bit of bush. We

found the snow deep and drifts hard for our horses to break through, and our progress was slow, very slow; and yet we soon caught up to the Hudson's Bay men and passed them. I was ahead all the time, tramping a trail with my snowshoes, and keeping the most direct course. Our teacher doctor was in misery. He never dreamed of such horrible conditions. He seemed to take on melancholy, and we were afraid to let him out of our sight for fear of suicide. To make matters worse, provisions began to run short.

We had made a cache on the south side of the Red Deer. Last winter's experience had taught us a degree of caution, but still there were long miles between us and the cache, and the cold was steady, and the whole country from Edmonton to where Innisfail now is situated was as if there was no life in it. Tramp, tramp, and struggle, and not only the doctor to watch, but now his horse was also playing out, and we had both man and horse to coddle and chirp up, and our rations growing smaller all the time. David and myself would sing and joke and try and laugh off the hardship, but the doctor was solemn and sour and ready to give up. As to our cache across the Red Deer, we had purposely never said anything about this to the doctor. We were not sure of it ourselves; some starving man might have found it, but our greatest fear was the cunning and skill of the omnipresent wolverine. If he had found our cache, and was able to circumvent our precautions, then alas for us.

It had been one of these dark, gloomy days, more or less drift and snow squalls, but almost too cold for the latter. The doctor was growing more depressed, and his horse, humor him as we would, showed signs of playing out. Nevertheless, we determined to make an effort, and reach our cache if possible.

It was some time after dark when I, being several miles ahead of my companions, came to the bluff of poplar not far from where we had left our store of provisions. I was greatly assured by not finding tracks of either men or beasts in the vicinity, so, taking off my snowshoes, I climbed down the precipice, on the slope of which stood the tree from which, extending away out over the bank by the use of another tree, we had hung the leather bag containing our precious store of provisions, and there, to my great joy, it hung, just as we had left it. As I could not very well take it down alone, I climbed back up, and now, greatly encouraged, went to work making camp. This I did, so far as I could without an axe, and busied myself breaking down and carrying in the dry poplars, all I could manage in this way. I had shovelled away the snow with my snowshoe, and built a huge fire, and broken off several armfuls of frozen willows with which to floor our camp, and packed in a lot of wood, and still my party did not show up. But presently I heard a horse neigh, and out of the darkness my little Bob trotted in. I very soon unhitched him and turned him loose to paw snow and forage for



food. Then up came my brother with his string of horses and sleds, and the first question was, "Well?" and I said, "All right," and he was thankful.

We turned his horses loose and got our axes out and went to work in real earnest to cut wood and finish making camp, and as yet there was no sign of the doctor; so I started on the back trail, and on a hard run, for we were very anxious about our companion. I must have run some three or four miles when I heard his voice, and said to myself, "Thank God, he is still alive," and in due time we were all in camp. Up to this we had not mentioned to the doctor anything about our cache, and the gloom upon his face was heavy to behold, as he sat down before the fire without uttering a word. Then David and I slipped away into the night and took down our bag of provisions and carried it into camp, and the doctor was so absorbed in his own misery that he saw us not, neither the strange bag that had come into our camp. There he sat, gloomily looking into the fire.

We melted snow and got our kettles boiling, and now we got out some of the mountain fort food and placed it to thaw before the fire. All of a sudden, the doctor noticed the spread, and then he woke up and began to take a fresh interest in life. Where did these provisions come from? When we told him, "Why, you never said a word about this." We told him we were not sure of finding it; the wolverine and the wandering Indian might have

discovered them. But now we were better equipped than when we left Edmonton—splendid dried meat, soft, fat pemmican, buffalo tongues, some nicely cooked bread foods our good wives had put up for us—and it was wonderful how that Englishman and Londoner came to and revived and became almost hilarious around that campfire. True, there was no trail; the snow and drifts were deep and difficult; the distance was not yet half accomplished; but now his stomach was satisfied, and thus his whole being was rejoicing. I suppose all men are more or less susceptible in this respect, but the ordinary Englishman<sup>o</sup> is, in my experience, at the top of this sort of susceptibility. Undoubtedly, through his stomach is the shortest way to his heart and head. And now, with renewed vigor, we pursued our journey through the drifts.

## CHAPTER XXX.

An unexpected addition to our larder—Help Hudson's Bay men—Travel through great herds of buffalo—Kill a whole herd of buffalo at one run—Buy unique "silk robe" from Stoney Indian.

When we were about midway between what is now Innisfail and Bowden, there came an addition to our larder which very much comforted us and helped out our commissary. This windfall came to us under peculiar circumstances. When at Edmonton my brother found his dog, which had been lost for some time. The canine was a stumpy-tailed eccentric, a very peculiar-looking brute at best; but now, when found, he was but a shocking mass of skin and bone, and on this trip, with our provisions running short, he had shared, and had been very content to quietly follow in the distance. This morning as I was tramping ahead on my snowshoes, a fine bunch of buffalo cows and calves came careering across our course at right angles. These were a splendid sight as the strong leaders plunged into the drifts and made the snow fly in all directions, and then the weaker and younger, clinging to the trail and following up as fast as possible. Suddenly, as I neared the track of the buffalo, I heard a yelp at my heels, and our bob-tailed pile of bones jumped past me and lunged

on through the snow on to the smashed-up trail of the herd, and then, with renewed speed, he bounded away on this. Near by there was a small creek, the banks of its valley at this point being about a thousand feet across. The buffalo had rushed down into the valley, and the dog had disappeared after them. I was expecting to see him returning from his futile chase, blown and spent, when all of a sudden I heard a furious barking across the valley. Running out to where I could see, I found that our dog had brought two husky calves to bay, and was holding them as if hypnotized by his furious jumping and barking as he sprang from one to the other.

By this time David came up, and as the doctor was near, we waited until he came, and then we gave him charge of our horses, bringing up any we thought might want to run, for him to hold. Then we ran across the valley and climbed the hill under cover as much as we could. As we had no rifles with us we were dependent upon our revolvers. The calves were in splendid condition, both big and fat. From behind the brow of the hill I took sight with my six-shooter; but David yelled, "Don't. You will hit my dog." And again and again, just as I wanted to shoot, he would pull my coat, or say, "Don't you kill my dog." I was waxing warm and just about to shoot, whether or not, when both calves suddenly started on the quick jump and took the back trail, and our dog was pounding after them for all he was worth.

David jumped away on his snowshoes down the hill, following in the run, and I after him. When about two-thirds down, he tripped on one of the big chunks of solid drift the buffalo herd had broken up in their rush, and over he went, head first into the loose snow, legs and feet up and snowshoes in mid-air.

It was a very funny sight, and I was exploding with laughter, which helped me also to take a header; for I had not gone a rod past my brother when down I came with full force, and was embedded in the snow. I was up about as quick as David, and when I had got the snow out of my eyes and was busy taking it out of my mouth and ears, etc., I saw the calves rushing up the other hill, straight for the doctor. There he stood, holding on to the horses, and the two stout young buffalo dashing right at him, and our dog following up as fast as he could. The whole scene was exceedingly funny. The doctor was in a terrible quandary as to what to do. The buffalo and the dog were coming right at him; then those horses, he dare not let them go; and here was a wall of deep snow all around him.

As soon as I got the snow out of my mouth I shouted to him, "Doctor," and as if he expected great relief from my call, he shouted back, "Yes." Again I shouted, "Doctor, stop those buffalo! stop those buffalo!" And now the doctor was in a greater dilemma than ever. How could he stop those buffalo? The doctor's consternation and

bewilderment, the dog's sudden resurrection, the unexpected chase, were all so exceedingly humorous that both David and I could hardly run with amusement.

Just then the plucky dog came and caught one of the calves by his leg, and being helped by the broken and deep snow, pulled him down, and I came up and grabbed the other leg, and there we held the big fellow. Now David came up and pounced down on his shoulders and head. When we had taken breath, and the other calf had again doubled on his track and was now following the herd away, we cut the throat of our prey, and were glad of this windfall of fine fresh meat, secured, as it had been, without our firing a shot. Of course, from thence on the dog was more than ever one of us, and this incident and the delicious meat of our hunt did much to cheer up and bring back to a fresh interest in this life our English Londoner.

Two days after this, as we were lunching, the Hudson's Bay men came up to us. They had run short of food and were pressing on, but when they came to where we had killed, they travelled almost night and day to come up to us for relief. We were able to give them both fresh and dried provisions, and, having this, they again dropped behind. When within some forty miles of our fort, the doctor's horse completely played out, and we left him on the road. The snow had lessened, and there was plenty of grass, and we hoped he would recuperate.

which, after a few days, he did, and this was a very strong evidence as to the nutritious grasses of this Southern country. A long, hard trip through deep snow and heavy drifts, and in poor condition to start with, and now we leave this horse on the plains in the month of January, and he lives and is able to come on in after a few days' rest in the big, wide, open country, feeding on this grass.

When within twenty miles of home, we came into buffalo numerous and in splendid condition. We travelled through great herds, and were glad, for, if we hurried up, we would be able to come out at once and kill and store away all the meat needed for the rest of the winter. Moreover, the Indians in our vicinity would make dry provisions, which we could trade and make pemmican out of for summer food, both at home and for travelling purposes.

We found our people well, and at once we started out on a hunt, and the very first afternoon hauled in several carcasses from within four miles of our fort. Then the next day we went across the river and into camp for regular hunting work. I had noticed that my brother was taking advantage of my pick of the herd whenever it so happened that we ran together. He had at this time the fastest horse, and when we charged, his method was to keep close to my side until he saw the direction of my run; then he would push his horse ahead and kill the best. To-day the ground and herds were favorable to my having my own pick. There was a

round hill in front of the buffalo, and I knew this would in all probability split the herd. There were four of us to run—a Hudson's Bay officer who, though a native of the Red River Valley, would now for the first time participate in a buffalo run; a Stoney Indian, David and myself.

When we dashed in I looked the herd over, and saw a few fine farrow cows running together. Keeping my eye on them, I pressed my horse towards the other side of the herd, and, as I had anticipated, the hill split the bunch, and I soon had my friends rushing the main body on one side of the hill while I took the other side after the fat cows. Of these I killed four, one right after the other, in a very short distance, and was busy placing the last one ready for skinning when my brother rode up, and noting the quality of animals as he helped me to put them right, said, "Why, where did you find these?" I told him I had found them by looking over the herd.

Then we went to look for our Hudson's Bay friend, and when we found him his face was all aflame with excitement. Said he, "Say, what is the matter with my gun?" He had fired the sixteen shots, and then bent the lever of the rifle in his excitement. "Where is your kill?" we casually enquired. "Oh, I must have a great many lying around," was the answer, but when we went with him to look there was not even a wounded animal to be found anywhere. This was most amazing to our tenderfoot hunter. He had fired sixteen



shots, but his experience had been like many another man's, so we told him by way of comfort.

Where we were was splendid ground for running, and we planned to bring buffalo from farther up the valley to this spot to run them on, if possible. In this we were successful, and our Hudson's Bay officer saw for the first time the "bringing in" of the wild cattle. In a couple of days we had loaded the sleds we had with us, and while our men took the meat to the fort we moved down in the valley and made camp in a new place, and again went on with our hunt. Here, in one of the runs, I had a close shave from a bad fall. Just as we were about to charge the herd, the Stoney Indian said to me, "Here, John, ride my horse." As there was not time to change saddles, I jumped on his horse just as he was, and away we rushed after the herd. There was one real good fat animal in the bunch, and I pressed the splendid little fellow under me after her. Then she jumped down a bank, and my horse jumped after her. In doing this the saddle girths snapped, and for a moment I was hanging on the horse's neck. Then I got back into my place on the horse, and had to run, to kill, and also to keep saddle and cloth on the horse with me. However, in a very few minutes I had killed the cow and kept everything together, and my Stoney, who had watched the run, complimented me on my horsemanship as well as on my hunting skill. My brother had made a good kill farther up, and having butchered our animals and protected the

meat as much as we could from the wolves, we again moved our camp farther down the valley to a spot which is now on the McDougall Orphanage and Training School claim.

The next day we made a big hunt and were kept busy on into the night skinning and cutting up our game. It was here, while in this camp, that I had the experience of being instrumental in drowning a fine herd of buffalo. I was running them on the flat when my horse slipped on a hard, shelving piece of drift, and we both rolled and tumbled far, so that before we (that is, the horse and man and gun) were together again, some time had elapsed before we caught up to the fast-moving herd. These were now near the river, and when I charged them they jumped the bank. I had barely time to pick and shoot one when my herd had slid out on the smooth ice and into a deep hole in the current, from which there was no way of escaping.

I climbed the steep bank, and in sorrow watched these wild cattle drown, as, one by one, they turned over and floated up against the ice of the river. I stood as one convicted in the very act of this immense slaughter. There would be sixty or seventy in the herd, but as it would be both dangerous and disagreeable to bother with them, we left the lot to freeze in and become the food and profit of a band of Sarcees, who came along later in the season and chopped them out. Many a time, in camp and home, my old friend, Chief Cheneka, would chide me for thus killing buffalo by the bunch. He

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would say, "I have killed many buffalo, but never more than five or six at once; and here comes John, who forever preaches economy and thrift, and he killed a whole herd at one run."

We remained in this camp and kept on hunting until our men had made several trips to and fro with the sleds, and our storehouses were being well filled with choice meat. It was at this time that I saw the wonderful instinct of the buffalo in crossing an ice-bound river. The ice was very smooth and glassy, and many score jumped the high bank at the mouth of the Ghost River and made to cross the Bow. I sat on my horse and thought that they would balk at the smooth ice; but, to my great astonishment, the wise animals bunched to the centre, and in a packed, dense mass, went skating and sliding across the smooth ice to the other bank without a tumble. They braced each other across the hundred yards or more of glassy ice, and went on the run up the other bank as if this was a common experience in their history, and again I said to myself, "How wonderful is instinct."

Having secured several thousands of pounds of splendid fresh meat, my next move was to put up a log schoolhouse and start our new teacher at work. In three or four days we had the first school in all this country south of Edmonton in fair running order.

This accomplished, and learning that a goodly number of my people were scattered in camps north and east and south of us, and busy gathering robes

and making provisions, as well as doing some timber<sup>2</sup> trapping, I started out on horseback alone and paid these what might be called a pastoral visit. I found them in camps of from ten to fifteen and twenty lodges, and all very glad to see me. I spent from two to three days in each camp, holding religious services and giving lectures on the coming changes in government, and settlement, and general civilization.

My whole equipment on this trip was a blanket and a little copy of the New Testament and my Cree hymn book. I always found a number of newly dressed robes arranged for me to use in the lodges I made my home in. The kindness and real genuine hospitality of these people was most refreshing, and the intense interest in our gatherings was encouraging. In the most northerly camp I visited on this trip I stumbled on a unique find in the shape of a "silk robe," a genuine freak in nature. This animal had been killed a few days before my coming, and now the skin was in parchment shape and arranged at the back of my seat in this lodge. When an opportune time came I asked mine host as to the killing, and also if he had promised the robe to anyone. When I found that I was the first on the spot I told him that I wanted to purchase this robe, and he answered, "Yes, you can have it." "How much do you want for it?" was my answer. Then he conferred with his wife, and she, speaking in Stoney, told him to ask six skins for the robe.

At this time an ordinary head-and tail dressed robe was priced at three skins. I understood what she said, and immediately told them that I was quite willing to give them thirty skins for the hide. They were astonished at this, and also overjoyed at my offer. I told the Indian the next time he came into the fort I would pay him the thirty skins, and his good wife smiled at the prospect of a new blanket and some strouds and cotton prints, etc. This Indian told me some time afterwards that when he went into the fort the Hudson's Bay trader wanted to know of him why he had let me have the robe, and said he would have paid very much more for it. "How much would you have given me for it?" enquired the Indian. The trader answered, "Six skins," and the Indian said, "Well, perhaps you might have given me that much, but I question." Then the Indian told the trader that I had given him thirty skins, and no more was said.

When I left that camp I had this parchment robe carefully packed and tied to my saddle, and, reaching home, Mrs. McDougall had it dressed by an Indian woman who was an expert in such work. To-day, if we had not prized and kept this robe, though living among buffalo for twenty years and handling and trading many robes, we would be absolutely without one. However, my wife has hung on to our silk robe, and when I see it, I also see the lodges among the Douglas firs on the foothill slope, and all the wild and strange life of the

winter of 1874-5 comes to me even as if it was but now; and those Indian people, men and women, splendid folks, genuine and true—Jacob and Cheneka and Bear's Paw and Hector Nimrod, the man who killed this animal with this beautiful covering. They have gone on, and we sorrowed for them, and yet we remain.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Back to the fort—Prepare for permanent establishment of mission—Send despatches to Mounted Police at Fort Macleod—First Protestant church parade of Mounted Police—Taken ill suddenly—Make trying journey for help.

Finishing our itinerary, and once more with our folk in the little fort at the foot of the great mountains, we busied ourselves in taking out timber, and in whip-sawing lumber, and in making shingles, and preparing for the permanent establishment of our mission down in the valley in due time. Up here on the big hill, in the timber, we had built the fort and erected a temporary church and a schoolhouse, and now the Government had come upon the scene; that is, the police were one hundred and fifty miles south of us and two hundred and twenty-five miles north of us, and there was peace in a measure; but as yet we were careful and constantly on the watch. However, God willing, we would make the attempt to move to the valley during the coming summer. In the meanwhile, the winter was strong, and the snow in this section was very deep, and the whiskey traders were taking advantage of the condition of the police as to horses and equipment, and the trade was going on vigorously at Sheep Creek and High River and away down the Bow.

Presently some wounded Indians were brought in, and there was plenty of evidence of whiskey and crime in the camps. As I had given the boys a fair chance in my December trip, I now felt in duty bound to act against them, which I did by collecting evidence and securing affidavits, and then I despatched these with a white man and an Indian guide, by way of the mountain trails, to the officer in command at Fort Macleod. However, as very stormy weather came and the snow deepened, my party, after being away three nights, returned, having failed. Then a brave, plucky Stoney Indian volunteered to take my despatches through, and I having cautioned him to avoid all white men en route, and to be sure on arrival to find the officer in command and deliver the package to him direct, my Stoney started. In due time he returned with letters from the colonel, acknowledging my despatch and evidence, and assuring me of action at once in the case, also complimenting me on my messenger, Benjamin, this being his name. He acted most prudently and wisely, and not until he was sure of the chief man did he give up his charge. Several guards and officers, as well as other white men, had done their best to find out his errand and secure the letters he carried; but Ben was neither to be bought nor coaxed, nor yet frightened. He would do what John had told him to do, and the result was that my despatch went straight to the colonel in command, and the colonel sent out Major Crozier, and he made a haul near Pine Coulee.



There was a general stampede right through the depth of winter for the country beyond the line, and there were very many breathings of threatenings and slaughter against us who had informed. For the time being, these men had forgotten the large measure of grace we had given them.

Early in March my brother and I made the journey to Macleod, and found the police settled in their new quarters and making the best of the wild and crude conditions they were placed in. Quite a village had sprung up outside the fort, and here the frontier and wild West were typified in earnest. Bull-whackers, and mule-punchers, and wolfers, and former desperadoes, and whiskey smugglers were here in strong evidence, and gambling and drinking went on in a modified form, even as before, but the natives were being protected and crime was almost extinct. Most certainly a new day had dawned. The country was fortunate in having a man like Col. Macleod at the helm in those early times. He was no extremist, and fully believed in giving every man fair play. Several seizures had been made and outfits confiscated.

The boys had miscalculated, and were caught; but a goodly number got away into the South country with their trade and stock.

While on this visit, I held the first Protestant service in the history of this part of the country. The police paraded, and the largest room in the

barracks was crowded. I preached to this congregation from the words contained in Gideon's battle-cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"—"Man in association with God."

I do not know now just how I handled my subject; but many a time since, someone who was there that Sabbath morning in March, 1875, has spoken to me concerning the significance of that service, and quoted my text, and said, "We will never forget the occasion." After our last rebellion, in 1885, some fourteen years after this first service, I preached from the same text to a congregation in the town of Macleod, under very different conditions, and a goodly number of the police were present, these being led by my old friend, Col. Steele, now of Strathcona Horse and South African fame.

Early Monday morning, before many were stirring, we started from the fort for our Northern home. We had crossed the Old Man's and the Willow Creek, and were rolling steadily over the plain. I was leading one horse and driving the other in my buckboard, and David, having bought two in Macleod, was now leading three behind his rig. Suddenly I took severe pains and cramps. Wondering what had happened to me, I thought, as the pain increased, "I will ask David to go ahead and let me follow," when, on looking around, I was startled at not seeing him on the seat of his buckboard. I pulled up, and when his horse came up to me, I found that he had slipped down out of the

seat into the bottom of the rig. When I shouted out, "What is the matter?" I heard a groan, and presently a voice asking me, "How did you feel when you took the smallpox?" Here was my brother in the same condition as myself, only worse; but when I proposed to return to the fort he was strongly opposed to it, and when I told him that I was in pain, and had been for the last hour, he said we must have taken poison. Certainly it seemed so.

However, we determined to go on; and thus we crossed that bleak plain, until we came to where we had "cached" some wood, at a place called "The Leavings," some thirty miles from Macleod. Here, after I had unhitched both horses and gathered the wood and made a fire, and fixed a place beside it, I helped David out of his rig, and then boiled the kettle, and made some tea, and got some food out; but neither of us could eat or drink, so I emptied out the kettle, caught up the horses, and harnessed and fixed up the lead ones. Then, making up a bed in the rig, I got David back into it, and again we started homeward.

All this time I was suffering, but the fact that my brother was worse spurred me up to action. Yet there were times when I had to fairly grit my teeth and pull in all my will-power to keep the trail and see that David's horses came on behind me. Fortunately, we both had taken good horses with us. I had "Little Bob" and "Favorite," both already well known to my readers. Every little

while I would shout back to my brother, and when he let me know he was still alive, I would push on around the drifts and bad places on the prairie, and then wonder how we were going to pass the coming night, which was now near at hand. We did not have a tent, and had very little wood, and the nearest good camping ground, without our going a long way out of our trail, was High River. I was seriously considering driving on all night when, in the dark of the evening, I saw a flash of light, and was glad, and told David about it.

After some miles we came to where some white men were camped for the night; but as we came up, they knew us, and put their fire out, and, as they had a covered wagon, they climbed into it and would not speak to us. The night was cold, and here we were, on the bleak plain and both sick, one very badly so.

However, I concluded to stop right there, and so I pulled up our two buckboards to make as much shelter as possible, and then made a little lee spot by hanging a canvas on the wheels of the buckboard, and made up our bed on the frozen ground beside this. When all was ready, I got David out of the rig and into the bed, and tucking him in, proceeded to look after our horses as well as I could, and then crawled in beside him, and there we lay through the long night. Here were some men of our own kind beside us, but because they blamed us for bringing in the police, they were now sulking and spiteful and, for aught we knew, dangerous.

We were both armed, and, in the state we were at the time, also dangerous, if they attempted to rouse us in any way. I very well remember how I felt between the spasms of pain that night, and almost wished at times for a row; and then a sense of condemnation would come over me, and I would ask for forgiveness, and, for a little while at any rate, be most repentant. David fought with pain all night, and at times would stiffen out and greatly alarm me, but I could do no more than keep the clothes on him and wait for morning. With the first break of day our sulky, silent neighbors pulled out without making a fire. They were determined to give us no help, if possible. From under the robes I watched them away, and then I got up and went to look for our horses. I found our original four some distance away, but the newly bought pair were not with them. When I came back and told David, he said, "Never mind; let them go; let us start on if you can." There was no wood to make a fire with, and neither of us desired either drink or meat; so I harnessed up, and again fixing up a bed for David in the bottom of his buckboard, on we went. Keeping up a good, quick step into High River shortly after noon, we drove right across and into the shelter of the woods, and camped.

When I had built up a big fire, I got David down beside it, and thus the rest of the day and night passed. We were both now in a raging fever, but during that night David mended some, and I, in

turn, got worse, and when morning came I was not able to move.

There we lay, David, by desperate effort, keeping up the fire. On our way out, we had found two men, old acquaintances of mine, on Sheep Creek, and now David said, "We must go on that far; possibly these men may have some medicine." I was passive, and did not feel like stirring, but my brother was insistent. Having harnessed up, he fixed a bed on the floor of the buckboard for me and practically lifted me into it, and we drove across the stretch to the Valley of the Sheep, only twelve or fourteen miles, to where these men were a few days since. The misery and pain were awful, and every little while David would stop to see if I was living.

In the waning of the day we came to the shack. This time we were welcomed and kindly treated. One of them said he had some medicine, given to him by the doctor on the Boundary Commission the year before. Hunting this up, I found amongst it some jalap and calomel, and gave some to David and took a good dose myself. After two days I felt the first inclination since we had started from Fort Macleod for some nourishment. David had been gaining in these two days, and was now glad to hear me ask for broth. One of our hosts went out and dug out the shoulder of a buffalo from a snowdrift, where he had cached it, and this being fine fresh meat, he sliced some off it with his axe, and very soon had it in the pot and boiling over the chimney

fire. I will never forget that broth nor those men. Every little while that night and all the next day I sipped the buffalo meat broth. These men had left farmstead homes in Western Ontario long years since, and had drifted across the Southern plains into the gold fields of California in the early days. After nineteen years on the Pacific slope they came across the mountains to Edmonton and did some mining on the Saskatchewan.

During the spring of 1871, I met them a day's journey east of Edmonton, on their way to visit once more the land of their birth. They had now spent twenty years from home, and there had come a hungering for the scenes of their childhood. As I rode westward that early spring day in '71, I thought of those men, and pictured their arrival back at the old homestead, and now, as I had opportunity, I questioned them about this, and they laughingly told me of their great disappointment. They had forgotten, in their life of constant change and wild experiences, that changes would also take place in the woods of older Canada, and when, after the long ride from where I had met them on horseback, and tedious journey by rail and stage coach, behold, all was changed. Hardly anyone knew them, many were dead, and a profound feeling of melancholy came upon them.

Said one, in relating the incident to me, "We came to Jack's old home first, and he got down and said, 'So long; will see you soon,' and I went on to my home that was, but now had passed into

other hands. When, three days later, we met, I said to Jack, 'Well, when will you be ready to go back West?' He looked at me in the most woeful manner, and answered, 'I was ready three days ago,' and we hurried away, and here we are."

Poor fellows! Within a few months both were victims of tragic ends. One was shot out of his saddle coming through the mountains on the old Kootenay trail, west of Macleod, and the other was drowned, also out of his saddle, while attempting to cross some horses opposite Fort Saskatchewan, a few miles from where I had met them in 1871. At the time of our narrative these men treated my brother and myself most kindly, and now, after spending some days and nights with them in their little shack, we said "Good-bye," and drove on.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

Reach home again—Major Walsh establishes Mounted Police post in Cypress Hills—Meet strange frontiersman—Montana rattlesnakes—One law for Indian and another law for white man.

From Sheep Creek to the upper valley of the Elbow, the snow was deep, and it took us all day to make this distance. I well remember how I felt in my weakness when, approaching the river, I saw it was a raging flood of rushing water and ice; and oh, what a relief when my splendid beast, Favorite, trotted up from following, and passed me, and then walked right in and breasted the current and tested the ice for us. On she went, as if endowed with perfect instinct, and having safely crossed, stood on the farther bank, and, looking back, neighed over to us, as much as to say, "Come on; it is all right." Little Bob pricked up his ears and pulled me across. "Was not that splendidly done?" said David, as he came up, and we drove on and camped with our old friend, Sam Livingstone, for the night. This was at the Old Mission, on the Elbow.

The next day we reached home, and no men were more glad than we for the rest and comfort of the same. The trip had been a hard one, and now we must make ready for another, and this time it was

our annual journey for supplies. This necessitated a whole lot of preparations, re-making and mending of carts, and wagons, and harness. All of these had to be overhauled and fixed up as best we could with our crude appliances. Then there were men and boys to look up and engage for the trip, also all possible arrangements to be made for the comfort and safety of those we would leave behind. The man who to-day has the commercial agent or the railroad to deal with has not the faintest perception of the worry and real hard work, and oftentimes distressing hardship, of the pioneer. Here were many rivers without ferries, and in this country, along the base of the Rocky Mountains, all of these during the midsummer period at their highest, every one of them like rushing torrents, the slope of the whole land making this obvious. Then there was the unsettled condition of the tribes across the border. These were always in turmoil, and the white men over there were not much more law-abiding than the natives. On our side of the line, this would be our first season of the trial of government. We were all anxious. As to our own little community, my brother's wife had not been well for some time, and we decided to take her East for the change. My wife took the little ten-months-old babe in charge and was herself once more and for the next six months the only white woman south of Edmonton in all this land.

We left during the last of April and travelled steadily southward as fast as our stock would

permit. At High River we came in with a large camp of Blackfeet, and with them found one of the horses we had lost some twenty-five miles south of this during our March trip. They were most friendly, and seemed to enjoy the change that had come. They looked upon myself as being one of the factors in bringing this about, and were grateful. Reaching Macleod, we found Major Walsh starting out with a detachment of police to establish a post in the Cypress Hills, and near the boundary. This would make the third police station in the farther West.

We passed through the village with our brigade just as this party moved out to build and occupy what was afterwards known for a number of years as Fort Walsh. The Cypress Hills had been the scene of a large amount of crime, and a shameful massacre had taken place recently at that point. A gang of white men, toughs, had turned loose with their improved arms on a lot of almost defenceless Indians. However, this move to-day would put a stop to any such work, and ruffianism would from now on take a back seat in our North-West territory.

This time we went straight out from Macleod on a new trail, and, keeping at it, in a few days were across the line. Coming to the Marias River, we were glad to find a scow ferry in working order, by means of which we made an easy crossing. We were here reminded of the necessity of constant watchfulness, as a bunch of horses had been run off

the night previous, and the avenging pursuers had just now started on the trail as we arrived upon the scene. Thus far, by ceaseless vigilance, we had kept our stock intact, but were on guard night and day, which, with continuous travel, makes hard work.

In due time we found ourselves nearing the Missouri River, in the vicinity of Fort Benton, and scouting ahead to look for the best place for a camp, both for stock and business. When some miles in advance of my party I was dashed at by a solitary horseman, who came down upon me at full speed. As he was heavily armed, I did not know for a minute what his intentions might be, but his first shout, in strong nasal and frontier English, relieved my mind of an attack.

"Hello! Be you the Rev. John from the North?" and I, answering in the affirmative, back came the explanation: "Well, I am d—— glad to catch you!"

I now saw my new friend was a typical south-of-the line frontiersman; costume, weapons, manner, all filled the bill. "You are really and truly a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? I want no humbug, I'll be d—— if I do! No, sir, you bet. I want the help of an honest preacher down at my shack. Yes, I do. My woman and me have lived together some time. We have three kids, d——d fine ones they are. Say, Elder, I want you to come to our shack and splice Betsy and me, and pour some water on the kids' heads. I want all this done

sure and strong, and no fooling, you bet. Can you canter down and do this job for us?"

I enquired particulars as to this man's name, and where his shack was situated, and made an engagement for the next afternoon, and we gripped hands on this, and my friend dashed on his way.

Coming to the steep bank of the Missouri, I noticed a covered wagon standing near the brow of the hill, and, cantering up to this, I aroused the man in charge, who crept up out of the covered box, and, in answer to my query, said this was the nearest spot to town where grass and water could be had.

My next question was, "What about snakes?" We had killed a number of rattlesnakes on the trip, and these seemed to be multiplying as we came south.

"Snakes," this man said, as he cursed them up and down, "did not cut in anyway." He "didn't give a cent for all the snakes," and this he emphasized with many oaths. By this time he had climbed down out of the wagon, and now stood near me as I sat on my horse.

Just then I saw an enormous rattler crawl out from the shade of the wagon and move towards the heels of this man. In the meanwhile I told him I was afraid of snakes, as we were not accustomed to them in our country, but perhaps our fears were groundless. And now, as the big rattler came near the loud, blasphemous fellow, I quietly said, "What about that chap at your heels?" and when he quickly turned to look, he gave a loud scream,

and, in a twinkling, was up in the wagon, and as pale as the proverbial ghost is said to be. I then got off my horse and killed the snake, and felt, as I had often experienced in the past, that the loud, noisy blasphemer is generally a coward at heart. As it proved, there were numbers of rattlesnakes almost everywhere in this part of Montana; nevertheless, we went into camp, and began our exchange and barter and purchase of supplies for the year with the merchants of Fort Benton.

The next afternoon I went, as per my engagement, to the shack of the hardy frontiersman, and was met this time with a real welcome. He was now assured of my quality, he having made some enquiries and found out that I was genuine. He introduced "his woman and kids" with pride, and very soon I had married this white man to this Indian woman and baptized their three children, all of which seemed to give great satisfaction to the whole family, the father every little while expressing himself in strong language, "You bet," and I left with the smiles and blessings of the inmates of the shack, for, as this man said, "Preachers of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ are mighty scarce around these 'ere parts, you bet." He was "d——d glad to strike one." Sure enough, the Gospel preacher was scarce in Montana at this time. Miners, merchants, ranchers, soldiers, cowboys, mule-punchers, bull-whackers, wolfers, gamblers, murderers, thieves, whiskey smugglers and traders were strongly in evidence, but the

church and schoolhouse and the Sabbath in observance were not to be found. The time was wild, and the life full of license.

For many years, south of the 49th parallel, there had been what seemed to be a distinct law for the white men as against the Indian. The latter might fight and kill and plunder each other as they pleased, and the white man could kill and plunder and debase the Indian; but let the Indian turn against the white man, and then the strength of military organization and the weight of the white man was set against the Indian. It was race against race and tribe against tribe, and all this created a perfectly lawless condition. A small war party committed some depredation, and the United States army, if they could come up with the Indians, massacred a whole encampment, regardless of the fact that hundreds in it were absolutely innocent in the case.

All over this Western country, south of the line, it was a meritorious act in white-men circles to kill Indians. Frontier military posts were established for the protection of the white man, and for his aggrandizement, and not for the establishing of law and order among men. The Indian was not a man. He was a "buck." The Indian woman was not a woman. She was a "bitch," or a "squaw." True democracy did not exist. The doctrine, "All men are equal," was a farce, and all this proves what a strange, illogical paradox man is. This condition was strongly in evidence at Fort Benton at the time I write of.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

At Fort Benton—Steamer comes up the river—Strange scenes on landing—First sight of a silk hat—Start for Sun River Settlement.

When we reached this frontier town, in the early summer of 1875, we found everybody waiting for the arrival of the first steamer of the season. Couriers had brought word of a boat having been seen steadily stemming the current away below, and when we made our entry all eyes were watching the distant bend, around which this communicating link between civilization and barbarism would appear. This was now past the middle of May, and it was early in September when the last boat disappeared behind the same bend, and merchants and people and hearts and homes were now on the *qui vive* for the first sight of another. How well I remember standing beside a mother, the wife of a rancher, who was there that morning, hoping to meet her two children, from whom she had been parted for some years. The boy and girl had been away at a far-distant school. The mother had lived on the lonely ranch. Her dear ones might be on this first boat. She was not sure. She laughed, she sang, she cried.

Presently there came a shout, and, sure enough, there was the wheel-house, and later, a smokestack



of the big river steamer, whose monstrous superstructure now slowly came in sight. It would take an hour or more for her to make the landing and throw out her big gang-plank; but this mother had already run down to the water's edge, and now she was coming back. She was so tremendously excited she could not wait in quiet, and I found myself hoping strongly with her that her children would be among the passengers of this first boat of the season.

Scores of wild and hardened men took note of that mother's agitation, and we all hoped with her, and the crowd shouted when the mother, as the steamer drew near, recognizing her loved ones, cried out through her tears, "There they are; there they are. Thank God!" I fully believe we all were thankful and rejoiced with this pioneer mother. We had with us men and boys who had never seen a steamer. Their people throughout all the ages had never beheld this sight—this big, moving village, the clouds of smoke, the hissing steam of the high-pressure engines, the shrill scream of the loud whistle.

My, my, what a sight, what strange sounds!

It was a study to watch these men, as, with bulging eyes, they were now beholding a new world. And to us who, though familiar with steamboats and railroads, had but seldom seen them for some years past, to stand once more in touch with all this, to come, as we had just now, out of the big wilderness and intense isolation, and here again

to feel ourselves akin to all humanity, surely, we were also stirred. St. Louis and Fort Benton were three thousand miles apart by river navigation, but the awakening of men and the discovery of steam-power had bridged across the currents and around the bars and weary distances, had cut out the dug-out and canoe and small hand-manned boat, and here we were, with the products of the far East landed in a good water season from St. Louis to Fort Benton at the rate of three cents per pound.

The overland rate from Fort Garry to Edmonton was ten cents a pound, and the loss by wear and tear very much larger. Great is steam and great is mind! Here we have ocean and river and magnificent world, and when we are permitted to behold all these in conjunction, we must concede, "Great is God." In Fort Benton, on the headwaters of the long Missouri, during the hours of that lovely summer's day in 1875, very few men thought of God. They took His name on their lips. On every hand this was done. One could not get out of the sound of blasphemy. But to think rationally of God—there was no evidence of this.

I well remember the hush for a few minutes caused by the appearance of a gentlemanly-looking Easterner, who suddenly came down the gangway wearing a tall silk hat. Very many of the white men and Indians and mixed-bloods present had never seen such a hat on a white man, and all of us had not seen this for many years; but now, behold, here he came, fully arrayed in a long

Albert coat and a tall silk hat. Merchants stood, and teamsters looked, and natives wondered.

Was this the President of the United States?

One of our men, with a hush in his voice, said to me, "John, what great chief is that?" I confessed I did not know; and yet, perfectly unconscious of the effect of his wonderful hat, this man came on shore and moved up the bank; and behold, Benton stood the shock, and again men breathed, and wheels turned, and oaths came free and full, and another boat hove in sight, and we traded and bartered and loaded up our carts and wagons and prepared for our long and dangerous journey back to our mountain home.

My brother and his wife went down the river by the return of the first boat, my sister-in-law to spend the year and more in Eastern Canada, and David to outfit anew and return from Fort Garry or Winnipeg across the plains to the mountains.

In the meanwhile, he left all his interest in this trip and at home with his brother-in-law, Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, Jr., who, coming as a strong, growing lad to Manitoba in 1869, had thoroughly westernized and was a first-class pioneer and a splendid fellow. "Kenny," as we called him, could always be depended upon to be found in his place, and fitting.

Going south, we had with us Sam Livingstone and his outfit, but for the return journey, Sam not being ready, we left him in camp near Fort Benton, and the McDougall outfit, as we were termed, made

up our party. Each of us had bought a string team, and it fell upon Kenny and myself to drive these. For us, and for our Northern modes of transport, these were an innovation. The method was to have two or three wagons coupled together, and from eight to sixteen horses or mules hitched to the lead wagon. The driver rode the nigh wheeler, and drove by a single rein, which was attached to the bit of the nigh leader, which, in turn, had a small rod snapped from his mouth to that of his mate, so that when the nigh horse or mule turned, the mate must do likewise. There was a long strap from the strong shank of the brake handle, reaching loosely to the saddle of the driver.

Before we left Benton I came up against a typical Westerner, who had ridden to town from somewhere, and was now well on in whiskey, and who was so "eternally glad" to come across his "old friend, John," that he pulled me into a saloon, and, before I could interfere, had called for the drinks. However, as I would neither drink nor smoke, he was becoming mad, when just then I caught sight of an apple up on the shelf between the decanters. I said I would gladly take the apple and eat it while he drank the whiskey and smoked the cigars. The bartender did not want to sell the apple, but my friend grabbed his revolver and told him to pass it down, which he did. Then I thought of my wife, who had not seen an apple since she left the East, and when we were ready to start, I went to this same saloon, and by paying handsomely,

secured seven apples, which I carefully packed and put away in my wagon, hoping to bring these home to my wife in due time.

This time we concluded to return by way of the upper trail, along the mountains and foothills. This would take us to Sun River Settlement and within sight of Fort Shaw. It was now in June, and summer was clothing the prairies with wealth of grass and richness of color. Man had placed strong poles along this route between Fort Benton and on to the mountain town of Helena, and had stretched heavy wire thereon to carry his messages to and fro; but the countless herds of buffalo had knocked these poles down, and broken the wire, and scattered it over the prairie. As we travelled we saw constant evidence of this.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

A unique storm—Stock stampede—Half a million buffalo in one herd—Surprised by Piegans.

While on this route between Fort Benton and Sun River we were visited by a most unique storm. I had lived out of doors the most of my life, and had been in and through many storms. However, this one, in certain quality, was at the top in our experience. It was a very hot day, and calm and still. We had started early, and, having made two drives, were now about to unhitch for our second spell when I noticed a strange cloud in the northwest, and saw that this was approaching us rapidly. I shouted to our men to form into corral quickly and unharness as smartly as possible. I had four mules and four horses to unharness myself, and made all the haste I could, and was springing to make the corral as strong as we could by interlocking the wheels of the carts and wagons, when there fell near me a chunk of ice as big as a large hen's egg.

I had seen many hailstorms, all across Eastern Canada and in the North-West, but no such hailstones as this one I held in my hand. Our boys were rounding up the stock to drive them into the corral, when down came another and another of these chunks of ice. I

shouted to our men to let the stock go, and for them to take shelter, and in a twinkling we were crouching under our carts and wagons, and the wildest hailstorm I had seen was upon us. The crash and roar was dreadful, and it seemed as if everything exposed must perish.

Very soon the whole valley was covered with ice and water, and the storm was passed, and we looked in vain for a single hoof of stock. I expected to see some dead, but there were none, either dead or alive, in sight anywhere. The furious storm had driven all before it, and here we were, without even a saddle horse. Nearby to us were a lot of Montana freighters, and they were in like predicament. My first thought was to follow the course of the storm, and away I ran, taking up one of my old strides when after the dogs in the North country. All I had with me was my revolver and a light riding bridle. I ran some miles before I came upon any of the stock.

Among the first lot I came to was one of my horses, easy to catch, and, having mounted him, I pushed on, passing several groups of horses and mules and some oxen. When I could not see or track any beyond in that direction, I turned and started gathering up and driving back everything I found towards camp. The first man I met was Kenny, and he and I rounded up the big bunch of promiscuous stock, and bringing these in, we saddled up and regularly organized for the hunt; but it was the afternoon of the third day after the

storm before we had all our stock found, and we thought ourselves very fortunate indeed in not losing any. In the meantime the sun had shone out and the roads dried up, and all the earth was fresh and green and happy, just as if there were never any storms to disturb.

On we went, and I very well remember our coming out upon the summit looking down on the Valley of Sun River. Approximately, it would be from twelve to fifteen miles across to the limit of our range of vision on the sister summit, and from fifteen to twenty miles up and down the valley which I could cover with my eye as I surveyed the plain before me.

Immediately opposite to our gentle descent was the annual round-up—cattle and horses and cowmen and dust. As I found out later in the day from Mr. Robert Ford, who was the captain of the roundup, there were over twenty-three thousand head of cattle in the bunch down there at our feet. These were being held for the "cut-out" in a natural corral made by the eccentric windings of the river. This spot on which these twenty-three thousand cattle and horses and men were situated was, in the landscape before me, about as a single fly would be on the ceiling of a large audience room.

Several times in my wanderings I had found myself on the summits of hills much higher than those at Sun River, and commanding a wider expanse, and the whole country was like a tremendous round-



up. The cattle of God had gathered upon these spots, and, while what I had seen I knew would be but a small fraction of the whole herd, nevertheless, here were millions. Many times, from hills and range summits, I had seen more than half a million of buffalo at one time, judging of the number of cattle before me and of the shape of the country they were in. As I beheld them that glorious day in 1875, I was abundantly assured that my statement was a very modest estimate.

Passing through the Sun River Settlement, we turned north and again bade good-bye for the year to the evidences of civilization so-called, and anything like permanent settlement. Ours once more to face the wilderness, and in every wise to guard against our fellow-men and struggle with Nature and her forces as best we could. We still recognized the necessity of constant vigilance, and as Tom Robinson remained with me, whom my readers will remember as the young Nova Scotian who joined my party in 1874, and who was developing as a frontiersman, and had proved himself most reliable, we relieved him of any day work and put him on as an extra and constant "night man." From sunset to sunrise he was always on duty. The rest of us travelled and slept when we might, in our clothes, and with our arms forever with us.

We were quite conscious of extra danger on this trip because of the resentment of whiskey traders and adventurers who blamed us for bringing in the police, and also of laying information against

some of their people. Threats from these men had come to our ears, and now it was not the Indians of many tribes only, but also with them, the more resentful and debased of the white men, we had to guard against.

Feeling all this, we travelled with great care steadily northward. Every night we made a strong corral with our wagons and carts, and the last thing at night put the most valuable of our stock in there. Then, with early morning, we harnessed up and made, if possible, some miles before breakfast. Sometimes a swamp or a creek bottom would delay us for hours. Then an axle would break, or a felloe split, or a tire roll off. All these things did and would happen, and were as so many delays and trouble.

To travel and lift and work on the steady jump from daylight until dark; then to be under a tense, nervous strain, waking and dreaming and sleeping, all the night, was our regular life. There was nothing for it but to brace up or give up, and as we did not intend to give up, we just braced up and went on. However, I can very well remember that there were times during those young summer days when to me this life was splendid, and old mother earth most glorious.

Now, it was morning, and as I walked beside my team of mules and horses or rode in the saddle on the high wheeler, the sun flooded the mountain ranges and made the foothills resplendent, and on herb and grass and blossom the dewdrops

glistened and the atmosphere was fresh and fragrant, and I drew it in and filled my lungs and sang. Then care and weariness and a longing for home and loved ones would drop for the time, and as with Nature, around and about and above as well as beneath, my heart was glad. Or it might be that we were now rolling out from our noon spell, which had been full of work as well as refreshing, and as we beheld the immense region we were travelling through, at this time unpeopled, but full of latent possibilities and capable of carrying great populations, I would let my fancy run, and thus I saw the coming in of many peoples and the blending of races and the making of nations, for here were the great United States, and yonder also the great Dominion of Canada.

Here was the splendid room reserved throughout the ages for the giving to man a fresh opportunity of redeeming himself as one worthy of dwelling in such a world as this. Again, it was evening, and the sun was dropping on the mountains. Already the big plains were delicately shaded and slowly darkened. Here and there in spots the foothills were catching haloes of golden light; and even as we watched, these were blotting out, while still the mountain heights were full of glory. Yet this was, like all things material, passing quickly; but oh, the beauty of its passing! Fleecy clouds and snow-clad peaks blending under the concentration of the King's intense gaze thereon. It was as if both sun

and earth, as they said "Good-night," truly blushed and gave color to all things seen.

While nooning one day, and still south of the line, there came upon us suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a troop of young Piegans. They saw at once that we were not surprised, for every boy and man in our party had his arms in hand, though the suddenness of their appearing surprised and amazed us because of this consummate ability to take what cover the undulations of the land gave.

It would take any white man I ever knew generations of constant practice to thus be able to approach and not be felt nor seen. But here they were, and we acted as if such visitations were common. Being spokesman, I welcomed them to our camp. In numbers they were more than us, and we could see how minutely they were taking stock of our equipment and personnel. As was our invariable custom, we treated them courteously, and before we parted I was much amused to have one of them who, in dress and paints and general appearance, was exceedingly aboriginal, speak to me in regular "Yankee twang."

"I say, boss, when are you going to pull out? Where do you belong? Where are you going to camp to-night?" When I had answered him I ventured to enquire as to where he had learned his English, and he answered that he had been "A-bull-whacking between Benton and Helena."

It was interesting to note how this young Indian was forced to contort his face and work his mouth

and voice functions in order to give out the nasal sound he believed was essential to the use of English. In his own tongue he was natural.

Our boys and men were greatly amused to hear English thus spoken, and for many a day we could hear them trying to imitate this young student of a strange language. This visit intensified our vigilance and also qualified our conceit in our frontier craft.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

Government fully established—Mounted Police in control of situation—Meet Chief "Bear's Paw"—Good news from the hill fort—Home again.

It was on this trip our experience, as on others through this same country, to camp for the night on the banks of a stream whose waters ran into the Gulf of Mexico, and then moving on over the divide in the early morn, take breakfast beside another stream whose waters ran into the Hudson's Bay. Now we were once more in Canadian territory and had only two hundred miles of our journey to make between us and home. However, the rivers were many which intervened, and their currents were strong, and there was much risk at every crossing, both to life and property. The St. Mary's, the Belly, the Kootenay, the Old Man's and Willow Creek and High River, and Sheep Creek, and the Elbow, and then the Big Bow, and when across that, "*home*." Between these streams were many smaller ones, which would give more or less anxiety and trouble, and for some weeks we could constantly sing, "One more river to cross," and press on.

No wonder the cost of the simplest necessity or small luxury in those days was great, and with most frontiersmen the latter were absolutely cut

out of their lives. And the years passed, and what is common to-day did not come in at any time into the homes of the real pioneer. To make the paths and blaze the trails was doubtless a great honor, but it meant also great sacrifice.

When we had passed Fort Macleod on our way we began to feel safer; the police were behind us. They represented the British Government. This was much to us. Naturally, the nearer we came to our home the more we thought about it. The Mounted Police had come; the Government was here, but the nearest representation thereof was one hundred and fifty miles across wild country to where we had left those few people in that distant mountain fort.

From the day we bade them good-bye we had not heard a word. It is true there had seemed to come to us across the spaces telepathic messages, and we were momentarily comforted; but there was nothing tangible, and we were anxious, very anxious. What might have happened gave us great concern at times. Then we would shake these feelings off and be ashamed of our fears; but still they came.

We crossed High River and Sheep Creek miles above where now the towns of High River and Okotoks are situated. South of Mosquito Creek we came in with a party of Kootenays who, on finding out that I was "John," were much relieved, and said that they knew all about us from the Stoneys, who often visited their country. "John" was all right, and we were thankful to know the fact,

Sheep Creek was fierce, but we found a pretty good crossing, and, by dint of great care and taking the whole day to it, we found ourselves and party safe on the north side of the stream. As if in direct answer to my thought, of which I had not made mention to a soul, Kenny came to me with the proposition that he now thought we were sufficiently north and comparatively safe, and Tom, who had been our night watch, could take my team, and thus let me loose to go on in the morning, and, if possible reach home.

This arrangement I eagerly jumped at. My saddle horses had been running in the loose herd most of the time, and were fat and fresh. I made ready that night for an early start, and remembered the apples I had packed away in my wagon; but when I opened the small box in which I had them packed five were rotten, and the remaining two were going that way fast. These I carefully packed in my canteens, and, the morning coming, bade my party good-bye and rode on. "Bob" and "Favorite" were splendid saddle horses, and I made good time, but I did not see a soul until I was within some ten miles south of the Bow River; then I rode into a band of Mountain Stoneys, under Chief Bear's Paw. These fairly took me by storm with the warmth of their welcome. They had always been my friends from our first acquaintance, but to-day men, women and children, everybody, almost embarrassed me with the expression of their delight because of my appearance amongst them.



Being curious, I made enquiry of Bear's Paw, and he told me that in the South country it was currently reported that I was to be killed on this trip; that white men had solemnly sworn to avenge themselves on me for my part in driving them out of this country with their whiskey traffic.

He told me that some white men he had met in the Pincher Creek country asked him if he had said good-bye to John when he saw him last, "For," said these white men, "you will never see him alive again in this world. The white men south of the line are pledged to kill him if he goes into that country."

This had made the Stoneys very anxious, and they had talked about it, and prayed for me night and morning in their lodges and camps; and now to-day, behold, here I was in the flesh, and all right, and with them once more. "Of course we are all glad, my friend, and we are thanking the Great Spirit for your safe return to us." I had not seen this camp since last autumn, but to know that they thus thought of me and my work was a great joy and profound encouragement at this time.

From the chief I learned that twenty nights since all was well at the little fort in the hill. A runner had come to his camp with news of our people. At that time all was safe, and it was reported that my old friend, Jacob Great Stoney, was in the vicinity and was acting as their bodyguard. These were good tidings, and I breathed freer, and shortly giving these people an account of our trip and the

news of the world in general, we sang a hymn of thanksgiving, and I offered prayer, and with a young Stoney accompanying me, we went on.

The chief had said, "The Bow is high. Jonas will go with you home." Jonas was the little boy I speak of in "Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe," who, on the banks of the Battle River in 1863, had never seen wheat flour. Now he was a strong, brave young fellow, and had already won a name for pluck and daring in war and hunt. He jumped on the back of little "Bob," and away we went, with the blessings of these mountain people. Coming to the Bow, we found the summer freshets strong, and it looked dangerous. Jonas said, "Give me everything you do not want to get wet," and he took my rifle and revolver and ammunition and outside clothing, and tying these with his shirt and leggings and moccasins, made a neat bundle, which he solidly fastened upon his back, and, mounting Bob, in he went, and I followed on Favorite. At once our horses lost bottom, and down we swept, but all the while making headway across, and in good time reached the northern bank.

I had now ridden some sixty miles and swam the Bow, and the three miles up into the foothills to our fort were as nothing, and in the early evening we were home. The sublime joy of meeting with wife and children and the few people who were with them cannot be expressed. Ordinary meetings are more or less joyous and grievous, but to come home and find all well during the times of the

great isolation of early days were seasons of wonderful rejoicing. As usual, Mrs. McDougall had a lot to tell about the fidelity of the Stoneys who had remained in the vicinity. Jacob had sent them, and himself came in and kept informed as to their welfare. Of course the police were within one hundred and fifty miles, but their presence was new to this whole country, and it remained to be seen how the native population would take them. If we, as missionary pioneers, had been successful in making the tribes understand British prestige, then a few policemen would be sufficient. We were hoping, but the risk was great.

In the meanwhile, and during the last two months, things were going all right on this side of the line.

The next day, which was a very warm one, I made the attempt to cross back to meet my men, but as there had come a fresh rush of cold waters from the glacial beds of the mountains, my horse and myself had barely plunged out into the current when I found my whole frame becoming cramped, and I had barely enough strength left to turn my horse back to the north shore and come out alive. I often feel that this was one of the many narrow escapes I have had from sudden death. My wife had ridden down thus far, and sat on her horse and watched this episode, and now, jumping from her seat, received me as one back from the jaws of death.

We concluded to hunt up a little punt which

was up the river cached somewhere in the brush, and, having found this, I saw that it must be caulked and pitched before it could be used. This necessitated going back up to the fort, and it was not until the next day that I made the crossing and rode out to meet my party. The third day later we were down at the bank with our loads and stock, and with now "only one more river to cross." However, this was a big one, and it was full and fierce in its rushing current.

We had decided that we would at this time move down to the open valley, and hoped to be able to erect buildings sufficient to house ourselves and store our supplies in before winter should come on. With this in view, all our people came down from the fort on the big hill, and we went into camp on the north side of the Bow River, and after some most strenuous days of hard work had crossed all our stock and goods and supplies and carted them up to the vicinity of where we intended to build our permanent home.

While away on this trip there had been sent to my aid as lay assistant, a Mr. Inkster, who was a native of the Red River Settlement, and whose mother tongue was Cree, but he also was a good English speaker, and a splendid mechanic as well.

Behold us, then, in July of 1875, beginning to plant a mission settlement in the Valley of the Bow. It is now a little more than two years since we selected this spot as both central and strategic for our purpose.

Since then we have travelled many thousands of miles, and opened up a fresh base of supplies, and by diligence kept our larder full of fresh buffalo meat and dried and cured provisions from the same animals. At intervals, we had built a fort for safety, and alongside of this a temporary church and schoolhouse, and made ready a lot of material in timber, lumber and shingles for our new, and, as we trusted, permanent buildings. Only the pioneer can appreciate the amount of labor there is in making lumber and dressing the same by hand, as also in making shingles in the same way; and besides this we had been as the forerunner of the Government in preparing the way for the Mounted Police. This had taken a good part of the season of 1874; and now, on the strength of there being three police stations organized in this Western country, namely, Forts Macleod, Walsh and Saskatchewan, and the nearest of these being about one hundred and fifty miles from us, we dared to risk our mission and lives out in the open country.

We knew that we were taking big chances, but our trust was in the Almighty, and our hope was that the conduct of the police would command the respect of the native population, and that, from now on, we should have good government, and peace should reign.

And now, having brought the readers of my books of narrative from 1842 into the midsummer of 1875, I will rest for a time, and hope to resume the story of the opening up of this greater West at some future day.